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POLL RESULTS

What's your level of optimism for 2008?

Verh high-15

high-10

mid-range-19

low-18

very low-24

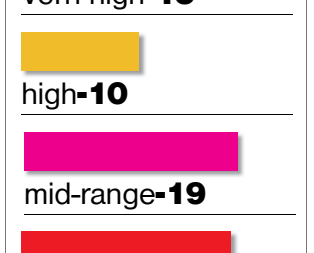
Sunday January 6, 2008

INSIDE

Wall of Water

A ruptured levee sent a frigid "wall of water" from a rain-swollen canal into this high desert town early Saturday, flooding hundreds of homes and forcing the rescue of dozens of people by helicopter and boat.

Nation...Page 14



Britney Released

Television's "Dr. Phil" McGraw said Britney Spears was released from a hospital Saturday but still needs psychological help, the syndicated programs "Entertainment Tonight" and "The Insider" reported in a press release.

Life & Style ... Page 21

'State of emergency nothing to do with fuel rate.' **PAGE 3**

Ex-MARPAC general manager's sentencing postponed again. **PAGE 5**

House OKs FY 2008 budget

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

Bent on beating its self-imposed Wednesday deadline for budget passage, the House of Representatives approved the appropriation bill for fiscal year 2008 on Saturday.

The $168.8-million budget will be on the Senate agenda for action this afternoon.

"I am optimistic that the Senate will look at the bill fairly and squarely, and

See HOUSE on Page 4

Malite estate gets $3.45M

But 2 lawyers seek over $3M in fees, costs

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
REPORTER

After seeking to be awarded collectively $1.8 million in attorneys' fees, the two lawyers of then Angel Malite estate administrator Jesus C. Tudela filed another billing statement in court claiming that their total fees and costs are over $3 million.

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo said in a document labeled, "Submission of Attorneys Fees

See MALITE on Page 4

Asiana's Kim is SCC's Business Person of the Year

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA
EDITOR

Kwang Joong Kim, the general manager of Asiana Airlines on Saipan, has been chosen as the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's 2007 Business Person of the Year.

The Chamber announced this year's honoree during the installation dinner held Saturday night at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.

RELATED NEWS

Chamber installs new set of officers.

PAGE 2

Kim is credited with playing a key role in the decision of Asiana Airlines' parent company, Kumho Asiana, to purchase LaoLao Bay Golf Course this past year and the company's commitment to building a $70-million resort at that property.

There were a total of six nominees to the award. The other nominees were Jim Arenovski, president of Delta Management Corp. and the new Chamber president; John Baldwin, principal and chief executive

See ASIANA'S on Page 4

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Saipan Chamber of Commerce 2008 Business Person of the Year Kwang Joong Kim, general manager of the Saipan Regional Sales Office of Asiana Airlines, delivers his remarks upon receiving the prestigious award during the organization's installation dinner at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Hibiscus Hall Saturday night.

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Local

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce 2008 Board of Directors raise their right hands and recite the oath in unison with Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman during the group's Installation dinner at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Hibiscus Hall Saturday night. From right, president James T. Arenovski, director Alexander A. Sablan, director Steve K. Jang, treasurer Michael S. Johnson, secretary Kathryn H. Barry, director Douglas A. Brennan, director John J. Santos, vice president Harry B. Blalock, and director David M. Sablan, Sr. ***See photo gallery on Page 6***

Chamber installs new set of officers

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA
EDITOR

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce installed a new set of officers during a glamorous dinner event held Saturday at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.

The night was highlighted by the announcement of the Chamber's Business Person of the Year, Kwang Joong Kim, the general manager of Asiana Airlines Saipan.

The Chamber officers for 2008 are James T. Arenovski as president, Harry Blalock, vice president; Michael S. Johnson, treasurer; Kathryn H. Barry, secretary; and directors Doug A. Brennan, Steve K. jang, Alex A. Sablan, David M. Sablan Sr., and John J. Santos. They were sworn in by Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman.

Emceed by Chris Nelson and Morgan Rose of KSPN 2, the event was keynoted by Commodore Phillip Sawyer, commander of the Submarine Squadron 15, who commended the great job did by the Marianas High School JROTC in posting the colors. He was joined at the head table by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, first lady Josie Fitial, and Cabinet members.

The Hibiscus Hall provided the perfect foil to the elegant evening, its yellow and red tiles polished to a high shine, the stage draped with black curtains that set off the Tivoli lights cascading down their front and the Micronesia Blues Society providing great music throughout the night.

Adding to the glamour factor was the way Fiesta's F&B staff served the different courses that night. Called parade service, 27 F&B staff dressed alike in black Mandarin-collared tops and black trousers would march down the center aisle in pairs to the front of the stage, then break apart, one line going to the left, the other going to the right. Each line would break into fives that would circle around each table and set down the dishes in unison. The choreography was flawless and ensured that everyone got served all at the same time.

Sawyer told the crowd that the upcoming buildup of forces in Guam is actually preceded by the buildup of submarines, which started in 2001. There are now three submarines homeported in Guam: the USS *Buffalo*, USS *Corpus Christi* and the USS *Houston*.

"This means that there are some 2,000 submariners that are permanently stationed in Guam," he said. The USS *Ohio* will soon be joining the three in Guam, Sawyer said, boosting the number of submariners on the island.

Sawyer also touched on the patriotism of the people of the CNMI and their love of country, which could be "one of the reasons why submariners love coming to Saipan."

Sawyer was joined at the event by officers of visiting submarine USS *Jefferson City*, which arrived Saturday morning for a five-day rest and relaxation on Saipan.

Outgoing Chamber president Juan T. Guerrero described the year under his leadership as extremely challenging, faced as the islands were by continued economic hardship, the threat of federalization of immigration, and minimum wage hike, the continuing rise in oil prices, and the power crisis that remains unresolved.

"In 2007, we experienced the lowest investment numbers in the last 20 years. …However, we need to face these setbacks and prove that we can overcome," Guerrero said.

He called for a cooperative relationship between the Legislature, the Executive Branch, and the private sector in finding solutions that will improve the lives of people.

Teenager in robbery case pleads guilty to assault and battery

A teenager has agreed to enter a guilty plea to assault and battery in exchange for the dismissal of the robbery charge filed against him.

Superior Court Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona accepted Denmar E. Malabanan's guilty plea and sentenced him to one year in prison, all suspended except for four days.

Following the plea agreement, Manglona gave the 19-year-old Malabanan credit for time he already served in jail.

The judge placed the defendant on one-year probation and required him to pay a $100 fine, $25 court assessment fee, and $100 probation fee.

Manglona ordered the defendant to pay $2,000 restitution to the victim, Joaquin T. Sablan.

Malabanan will be required to perform 40 hours of community work service.

A review hearing was set for March 12, 2008 to determine whether the defendant has complied with the terms and conditions of the sentencing.

The judge informed Malabanan that failure to appear at the review hearing will result in the issuance of a bench warrant.

The Attorney General's Office filed the information in April 2007 charging Malabanan with robbery, and assault and battery for beating and robbing Sablan. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

'State of emergency nothing to do with fuel rate'

By FERDIE DE L A TORRE
REPORTER

The electric fuel rate does not have anything to do with the state of emergency, according to Commonwealth Utilities Corp. spokesperson Pamela Mathis.

Mathis explained that the electric fuel rate for January at 25.8 cents per kilowatt hour is not set by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, but is primarily from Mobil fuel prices.

Mathis said the state of emergency gives CUC the authority to charge the exact fuel rates to all customers equally.

"The dollar figure, the cents figure, the number have nothing to do with the state of emergency," she said.

Mathis said the electric fuel rate fluctuates every month either up or down according to the costs and fuel and the number of kilowatt-hours sold.

"It is CUC's intention to make the fluctuation of electric fuel rates in the regulations according to the new law so that there is one electric fuel rate for all customers which is what we are doing under the emergency, which is what we also did under the permanent regulations before," she said.

She said the electric fuel rate fluctuates—it goes up and goes down according to few factors.

"What the world fuel prices sold from Mobil in Singapore to Saipan. And how much kilowatt hours are divided into that. So that rate changes," Mathis said.

What that rate is does not have to do with the state of emergency.

Since November 2007, the electric fuel rate has been 25.8 cents per kilowatt-hour which is the highest ever imposed in the CNMI.

Residential customers saw the lowest fuel rates starting on Oct. 4, 2007, when Public Law 15-94 took effect, putting a cap at 17.6 cents per kWh kilowatt-hour.

But with Fitial's signing of emergency regulations on Nov. 9, 2007, the electric fuel rates for residential customers went from 17.6 cents per kWh to the highest ever 25.8 cents per kWh.

Mathis

The emergency adoption amended the utility's Electric Service Regulations or specifically the electric fuel rates for residential customers.

As signed by Fitial, the electric fuel rate for residential customers is the same as for any other class of customer.

CUC earlier explained that the adoption of emergency amendments updates rates set under Public Law 15-94 for residential customers that failed to achieve full cost recovery or pay actual expenses for the importation of big oil.

CUC said the electric fuel rate fluctuates each month, up or down, to reflect the current world fuel prices as delivered from Mobil Oil via Singapore.

DPS hiring new firefighters

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
REPORTER

Department of Public Safety Commissioner Rebecca Warfield said one of her goals this year is to hire new firefighters.

In an interview with *Saipan Tribune*, Warfield said she is aiming to graduate another fire cadet class during this year, although she does not exactly know as to how many cadets.

"We're not certain as how much our budget will allow. Our budget has not yet been passed by the Legislature. That will affect how funding will be, how many firefighters will able to graduate," she said.

Warfield

The commissioner said the academy is already in place and that they are now beginning the process in requesting more names from the Office of Personnel Management.

Although there was a fire academy last year, Warfield underscored the need to have another for this year.

"Over the years, with regard to DPS for various reasons people have left the department. But there haven't been academies to replace the people who retired, or the people who moved to the States," she said.

The commissioner said it is really important that DPS has another cycle for the fire because the department is just "kind of breaking even."

"We're just beginning to replace some of the people who left and we still need more so that we can cover all of the fire stations appropriately," Warfield pointed out.

In August 2007, eight fire cadets from Saipan, eight from Tinian, and one from Rota graduated at the 7th Cycle Fire Academy.

The following month, five fire cadets from Saipan and three other fire cadets from Rota graduated at the 8th Cycle Fire Academy.

Excluding the eight firefighters at the time, Saipan already has 70, Tinian has 13, and Rota has seven.

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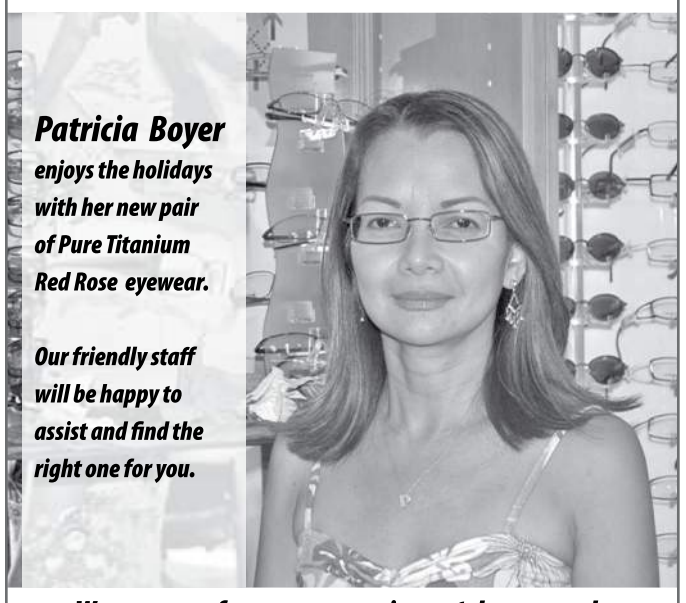

Patricia Boyer
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Rota site declared conservation area

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has signed into law a bill including the Talakhaya watershed in the Rota wildlife conservation area.

Fitial

Senate Local Bill 15-6, now Rota Local Law 15-8, imposes a ban on taking, harassing, or disturbing wildlife, plant life, and soil within the Talakhaya watershed.

The new law also allows government agencies to leverage conservation funds for restoration and revegatation activities in the legally protected site.

Authored by Sen. Felix Mendiola, the local measure stemmed from concerns about repeated wildland fires in the Talakhaya area over the years. The fires are believed to be intentionally set by poachers and hunters.

According to the bill, these fires have decreased soil stability and led to extensive erosion in the Talakhaya watershed and riparian habitats. Moreover, runoff of the soil into the coastline below has had devastating effects on the health of the reefs and marine life on and around Apanon Beach.

"It is the purpose of this local bill to include Talakhaya in the Rota wildlife conservation area so as to prohibit persons from engaging in certain activities that may have an adverse impact on the local environment," states the bill.

The ban includes taking or harassing all non-game wildlife such as fruit bats, bridled white eye, Marianas crow and other endangered species in the Talakhaya site. Plants, including fungi, forest vegetation or grasses, with the exception of medicinal plants, also may not be taken. The same prohibition applies to soil, including any sand or rock, in the watershed.

INSPIRATIONAL TALK JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

2007 Miss Marianas Teen Kayla Dee Atalig gives some inspirational remarks to 2008 Miss Teen Marianas prospective candidates during a pageant briefing at the Hard Rock Café in Garapan Saturday afternoon. ***See story on Page 7***

Fiji soldiers dominate ranks in British army

SUVA, Fiji (Fiji Times/PIR)—One in ten British soldiers is a foreigner, with the majority of them of Fijian origin, a British newspaper has reported.

Figures obtained by The Sun show Britain's overseas troops come from more than 40 Commonwealth countries dominated by 2,000 soldiers from Fiji.

The second biggest contingent 840—comes from South Africa, followed by Jamaica and Ghana, with 820 each.

Concerns have since been raised over the low numbers of British citizens who are enlisted in their own army.

According to The Sun 10 per cent of the 100,000 soldiers serving under the Union Flag are from other countries.

There are another 570 foreigners in the Royal Navy, with 50 more in the RAF. The numbers of foreign servicemen in the British arm have rocketed in recent years compared to only 300 foreign troops, not counting Gurkhas, reportedly enlisted a decade ago.

Concerns were raised that the armed forces are becoming too dependent on foreign recruits.

Long overseas tours of duty and poor quality housing are driving soldiers out of the army were factors which contributed to lower number of British residents enlisting.

Ministers admit it is more difficult to find new recruits when there are record levels of employment.

The Tories this week warned of a real danger that the army was becoming too dependent on foreign soldiers.

"There are problems looming on the horizon. South Africa is already planning a new law to stop its citizens joining foreign armies that would deprive us of more than 800 soldiers in one fell swoop," said Shadow defence secretary Liam Fox.

Mr Fox said: "It's vital that we do more to recruit and retain enough soldiers from Britain, he said.

The British Army Parents Association of Fiji could not be reached for a comment.

Military spokesman, Lit-Col Sitiveni Qiliho said they would not comment on matters relating to the British Army.

ASIANA'S

From Page 1

officer of Bridge Capital LLC; Kathryn Barry, marketing manager of Pacific Telecom Inc. and the new Chamber secretary; Laurie Peterka, proprietor of Practical Solutions; and Ivan Quichocho, vice president of logistics and corporate business development manager for Tan Holdings Corp.

A large crowd of the islands' business and political bigwigs gave Kim a resounding standing ovation upon the conclusion of his acceptance speech that was marked as much by his love for the islands and by his engaging candor that had everyone laughing.

"My assignment to Saipan was my first foreign country life. When I first came here and I visited Banzai Cliff, I fell in love with Saipan. I became convinced, it was my belief and confidence that I can sell the CNMI to the Korean people. I have had three years to do my job," he said.

Kim recounted that it has not been an easy process. He candidly told the crowd that he cried at least twice, once in relief when Kumho finally gave the go-signal to further invest in the Commonwealth.

Kim has been with Asiana for 19 years and served the company in a number of management positions throughout Korea before moving to the Commonwealth in 2005.

Asiana Airlines has significantly increased its flights between South Korea and Saipan, and will add almost 30,000 more annual inbound seats beginning Jan. 21, 2008, with the addition of three daytime flights weekly between Seoul and Saipan.

"Mr. Kim continues to encourage the company to consider additional routes and markets serving the Commonwealth's tourist market," according to the bio provided by the Chamber.

The Business Person of the Year is selected based on the person's community involvement and contributions, support for local workforce, and active participation in the Chamber, including attending membership meetings and participating in Chamber programs or committees. The recipient must also be a member of the Chamber and a resident of Saipan.

Previous awardees include David M. Sablan in 2005 and Juan "Pan" Guerrero in 2006.

MALITE

From Page 1

and Costs and Itemized Breakdown," Tudela's attorneys Reynaldo O. Yana and Antonio M. Atalig state that their total fees and costs are $3,020,613.50 or 87.55 percent of the $3.45 million that the Malite estate received from the government.

In his order granting the Malite heirs' motion to remove Tudela as the estate administrator, Govendo cited that, on May 17, 2006, Tudela filed a request for administrator's fees and attorneys' fees in the amount of $430,000.

The request, the judge pointed out, included the administrator's fees in the amount of $250,000 and attorneys' fees in the amount of $180,000.

He said that, on April 19, 2006, the court awarded the administrator's attorneys $150,000 in attorney's fees.

Govendo said that, on June 1, 2006, Tudela and his attorneys filed a petition for second partial distribution in which they sought an additional $214,323 in attorneys' fees for the probate case, in addition to the $1,138,500 awarded as a contingency fee in the civil case.

"Thus, collectively, as of June 1, 2006, the administrator and his attorneys collectively have sought to be awarded $1,752,823 in fees, or 50.8 percent of the estate," the judge noted.

As though this amount were not enough, Govendo said, attorneys Yana and Atalig filed yet another billing statement on Dec. 11, 2007, pursuant to a court order requesting a detailed breakdown of professional services provided in the administering the estate.

Govendo said with the Dec. 11 billing statement, the attorneys claim that their total fees and costs are $3,020,613.50.

Govendo kicked out Tudela as administrator of the Malite estate for mismanagement.

He said Tudela failed to object to an inflated attorneys' fees that reached a total of $1.3 million, which was received by Yana and Atalig.

The judge noted that the administrator has voiced no objection to the fees sought by the two lawyers despite the absence of detailed billing statements, invoices, or time records.

Govendo said Tudela also failed to close the estate within a reasonable time and provide documentation and justification for lofty administrator fees.

Govendo already suspended Yana and Atalig from practicing law for their failure to disgorge to the court the $1.3 million in attorneys' fees awarded them.

HOUSE

From Page 1

approve it tomorrow (Monday)," House Speaker Oscar M. Babauta said yesterday. He said he hopes to have the budget ready for transmittal to the governor before the House adjourns *sine die* on Wednesday.

The proposed budget appropriates $168.771 million in resources to government operations. This excludes $3.03 million that will go to the Department of Public Lands, whose revenues are separate from the general fund.

The latest version of the budget prescribes an 18-percent retirement contribution rate for the central government, Public School System, and Northern Marianas College. The 36.7-percent rate determined by the actuarial study will apply to all other agencies.

This provision may face opposition from the administration, which wants the contribution rate reduced to 11 percent.

The governor's other request, the suspension of holiday pay, is left out of the House-approved budget.

The Legislature will have a slightly smaller budget than what was proposed in the original bill. Each lawmaker will get $145,000, down from $155,000 initially. The Senate president is allocated $200,000 and the House speaker $250,000. Overall, the Legislature's budget will remain nearly $9 million, a huge difference from the $4.6 million proposed by the governor and from the $6.5 million that the Legislature actually spent last fiscal year.

Babauta said the Legislature's increased budget was necessary, as two new members will be added to the House of Representatives.

The budget grants the governor wide reprogramming authority over funding lapses from all budget activities, except the Legislature, the Judiciary, and the Public School System, to cover any shortfalls.

A maximum of $5.5 million in "cover-over" funds will be appropriated for the operations of the central government. The funds are part of the $26.4 million paid to the CNMI by the U.S. Treasury Department after the settlement of a dispute over federal taxes that the U.S. government failed to transfer—or "cover over"—to the local government. The rest of the amount have been used to pay tax refunds and rebates.

The government projects total resources of $174.398 million in FY2008. This includes traditional revenues, as well as resources outside of the General Fund, such as $5.171 million in Compact Impact funding and $3.5 million from previously earmarked funds deemed available for reprogramming.

However, only $168.771 million is available for appropriation for government activities. Of the difference, $3.030 million will go to the Department of Public Lands, $1.7 million to tobacco control programs, $2 million to solid waste management systems, and $450,000 to the deportation fund. Bond payments account for the $7.118 million balance.

The FY2008 budget will cover the period from Oct. 1, 2007 through Sept. 30, 2008.

Ex-MARPAC general manager's sentencing postponed again

The federal court's sentencing of former Marianas Pacific Distributors general manager Joseph V. Santos did not push through on Thursday as the parties in the case agreed to postpone the hearing.

Santos, through counsel Colin M. Thompson, and the U.S. government through assistant U.S. attorney Craig Moore requested the court to cancel the scheduled Jan. 3, 2008 sentencing.

Thompson and Moore asked the court to re-set the hearing instead for Jan. 23, 2008 at 8am.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson granted the request.

One reason cited for the continuance is that Santos' counsel, Thompson, is scheduled to be off-island on the original date (Jan. 3) sentencing schedule.

Moore will also be leaving island after Jan. 3rd, returning on Jan. 20, 2008.

Another reason is that Thompson and Moore both submitted comments to the U.S. Probation Office regarding its pre-sentence report on Santos.

As of this time, the U.S. Probation Office has yet to finalize the report due to the comments.

The defense counsel also anticipates the need for additional time to prepare for the sentencing hearing.

In September 2007, Santos entered a guilty plea in federal court to charges he defrauded MARPAC approximately $520,000 in four years.

Santos pleaded guilty to an information charging him with mail fraud.

Munson accepted Santos's plea and set the sentencing for Dec. 11, 2007 at 9am. The sentencing was then re-set for Jan. 3, 2008.

The prosecution said that between January 2003 and in April 2006, Santos made a total $521,813.40 in unexplained cash deposits into four separate bank accounts.

Moore stated in the information that MARPAC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Ambros. Inc., a closely held corporation in Guam.

As a franchisee of Anheuser-Busch, MARPAC sells beer products to retail vendors on Saipan.

Moore said MARPAC first hired Santos in 1993 but promoted him the following year when the general manager position became vacant.

Moore said that between January 2003 and April 2006, the defendant "devised a scheme and artifice to defraud MARPAC and for obtaining money and property by means of false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises."

Moore said the object of the scheme was to steal money belonging to MARPAC. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Taking rays, feeding sharks now illegal

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

It is now illegal to take rays from Commonwealth waters, and to feed sharks without a permit within the near-shore waters.

This came after Gov. Benigno R. Fitial signed into law Senate Bill 15-100, authored by Sen. Pete P. Reyes.

Under Public Law 15-124, anyone convicted of violating either prohibition may face six months in prison and or a fine of $1,000. Repeat violators may be imprisoned for a year and imposed a fine of $3,000.

On top of the criminal penalties, the director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife may assess a maximum civil penalty of $5,000 against a violator of the ban on ray taking or shark feeding.

The legislation was based upon findings that the eagle ray population in the CNMI are under threat due to hunting. In addition to environmental concerns, such hunting is feared to instill an unnatural fear of divers, thereby making the CNMI a less attractive diving destinations.

There is a popular scuba diving location commonly called "Eagle Ray City" in the waters off Saipan. The dive site is popular because spotted eagle rays regularly gather in the area. It is rare to find naturally occurring gatherings of such creatures on a regular basis.

Eagle Ray City helps ecotourism as it is only accessible by boat. Divers, as well as tourists and residents alike, need to hire local guides and secure the services of local boats to reach the spot.

Meanwhile, shark feeding became a concern following reports that some tour operators had been feeding sharks in areas traditionally used by children to swim, notably Saipan's Grotto.

The Legislature noted that this practice is dangerous and should be discouraged.

WELCOME DANCE
Members of the Wellipal Cultural Dance Group perform a traditional Carolinian dance number as they welcome the first visit of the USS *Jefferson City* (SSN-759) at the Port of Saipan Saturday morning. The submarine is homeported in San Diego, California, and carries a total number of 138 military personnel and is set to submerge early morning on Jan 10.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

SNILD to act on funding for Saipan workers

The Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation will act today on a bill appropriating local funds for the salaries of Saipan employees that were to be laid off effective Dec. 22, 2007.

Rep. Oscar M. Babauta said some $2 million will be transferred from previous local appropriations to ensure that central government and municipal employees affected by the planned layoff could keep their jobs.

The SNILD session is scheduled for 9am today. It may be the delegation's final session, as a new set of lawmakers is assuming office on Monday, Jan. 14, 2008.

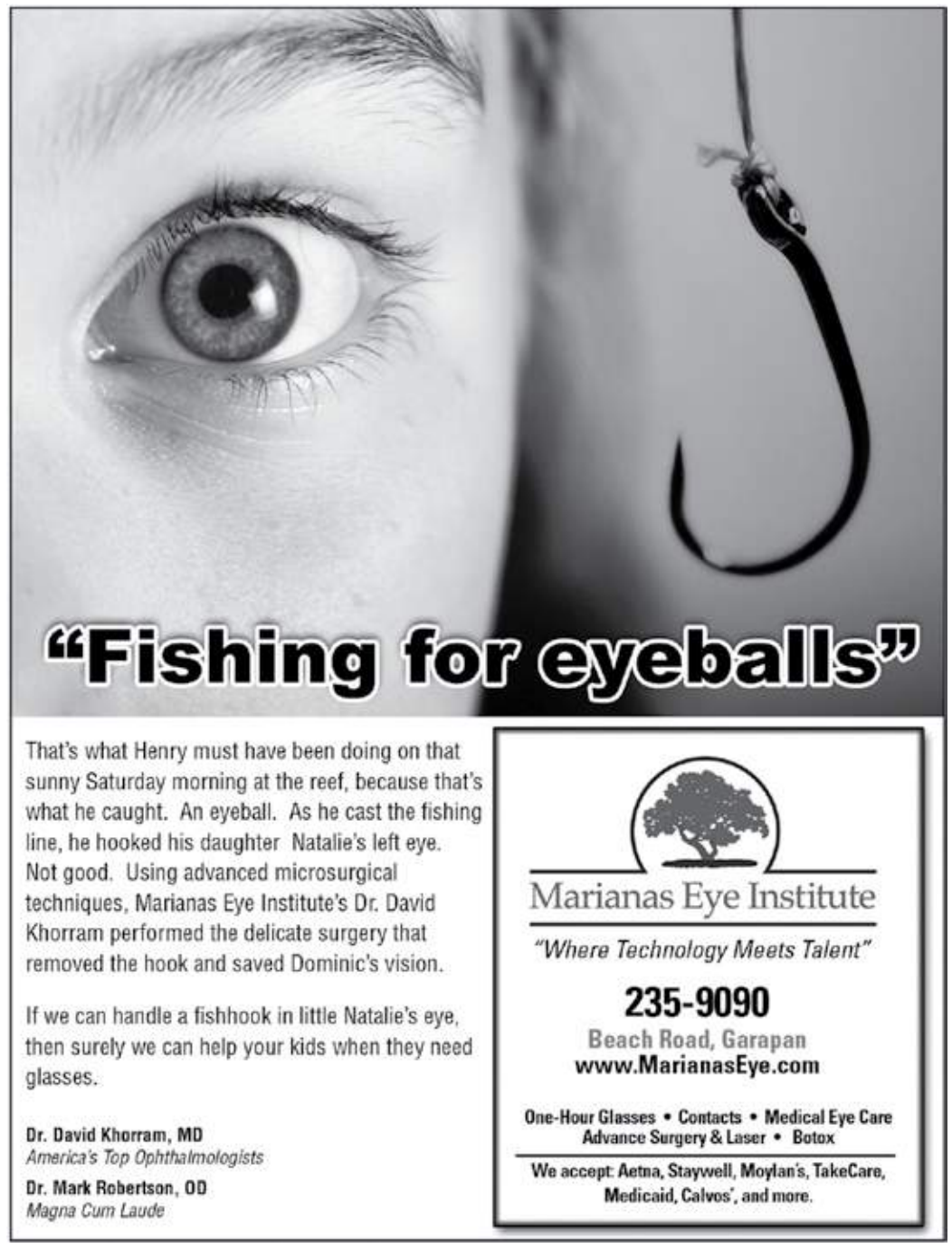
A total of 157 government workers are already benefiting from the Saipan delegation's plan.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial allowed them to stay in service beyond Dec. 22 based on a promise by the Saipan lawmakers to provide funds for the personnel costs.

Meanwhile, the fates of some 129 employees on Tinian and 111 on Rota remain unclear.

Tinian Sen. Joseph Mendiola said he and his colleagues could not follow the lead of their Saipan counterparts because Tinian does not have the money.

The contracts of the 397 employees were renewed until Dec. 22 only due to unavailability of funds. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***


"Fishing for eyeballs"
That's what Henry must have been doing on that sunny Saturday morning at the reef, because that's what he caught. An eyeball. As he cast the fishing line, he hooked his daughter Natalie's left eye. Not good. Using advanced microsurgical techniques, Marianas Eye Institute's Dr. David Khorram performed the delicate surgery that removed the hook and saved Dominic's vision.
If we can handle a fishhook in little Natalie's eye, then surely we can help your kids when they need glasses.
Dr. David Khorram, MD
America's Top Ophthalmologists
Dr. Mark Robertson, OD
Magna Cum Laude
Marianas Eye Institute
"Where Technology Meets Talent"
235-9090
Beach Road, Garapan
www.MarianasEye.com
One-Hour Glasses • Contacts • Medical Eye Care
Advance Surgery & Laser • Botox
We accept: Aetna, Staywell, Moylan's, TakeCare, Medicaid, Calvos', and more.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Department of Public Health
Women, Infants and Children Program
Navy Hill Bldg N-25

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

On August 8, 2007 the Department of Public Health officially opened the Women, Infants and Children Program, better known as "WIC."

The WIC Program is 100% federally funded, and provides nutritious foods, nutrition education, and health care referrals for pregnant and new mothers, infants and children below the age of five (5).

The WIC Program's goals are to reduce nutrition related health problems, promote breastfeeding, prevent anemia, and help lower medical costs for low-income families in the CNMI.

WIC foods include iron-fortified infant formula and infant cereal, iron-fortified adult cereal, vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, dried beans/peas, tuna fish and carrots. Special therapeutic infant formulas and medical foods may be provided when prescribed by a physician for a specified medical condition.

The Program would like to thank the community for it's patience during the initial phase of operation, and would like to assure the residents of Rota and Tinian that plans are underway to bring services to these respective islands. More information will be provided when the proposed opening dates are confirmed.

Eligible participants must meet income guidelines, CNMI residency requirements, and be determined to be "nutritionally at risk" by a health professional.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 236-8750/58 or visit the WIC Clinic in the CHC Dialysis Center, north entrance.

2008 SSC Board of Directors installation dinner

Members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce 2008 Board of Directors gather for a photo during the group's Installation dinner at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Hibiscus Hall Saturday night. From left, director Alexander A. Sablan, director John J. Santos, president James T. Arenovski, vice president Harry B. Blalock, secretary Kathryn H. Barry, director Steve K. Jang, director David M. Sablan, Sr., treasurer Michael S. Johnson, and director Douglas A. Brennan.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

2007 Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Juan T. Guerrero, left, presents the Saipan Chamber of Commerce 2008 Business Person of the Year award to Kwang Joong Kim, general manager of the Saipan Regional Sales Office of Asiana Airlines.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

2008 Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Jim Arenovski delivers the 2008 president's address.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

2007 Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Juan T. Guerrero gives his outgoing president's address.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

U.S. Navy Capt. Phillip Sawyer, Commander of Submarine Squadron 15, gestures as he delivers his keynote speech.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Director Alexander A. Sablan leads the recognition of Outgoing directors.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Saipan Chamber of Commerce former executive director Christine Parke gives her remarks upon being recognized for her hard work and dedication for the group.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Saipan Chamber of Commerce 2008 Business Person of the Year awardee Kwang Joong Kim poses for a group photo with Gov. Benigno Fitial, First lady Josie Fitial and sister, Jerry Tan and Marian Aldan-Pierce.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

KSPN Channel 2 News anchors Morgan Rose and Chris Nelson hosted the installation dinner event.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Members of Saipan Chamber of Commerce and community members gather for the 2008 Board of Directors installation dinner at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Hibiscus Hall Saturday night.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Fiesta Resort & Spa restaurant staff parade as they elegantly serve a meal during the five-course dinner.
JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

32 Miss Marianas Teen contestants briefed

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
REPORTER

Stellar Marianas briefed 32 interested candidates for the Miss Marianas Teen competition last Saturday at the Hard Rock Café.

The briefing revolved around what to expect prior and after the competition including prizes.

According to Stellar Marianas president Layla Boyer, the selection process and the final number of contestants are still in working progress.

The application process for this year's beauty pageants have changed. Instead of filling out a traditional application, members of the community have the opportunity to recommend candidates.

Two letters of recommendations are required from each interested contestant.

Local teen model Ariel Sinclair shared with the contestants her experience as a model.

Sinclair has done posters for Coca-Cola and Elite Modeling Agency based in California.

"It's a lot of fun. All you have to do is just be yourself. No matter what, even if you're weird. They like that," Sinclair said.

Miss Marianas Teen Kayla Borja gave words of encouragement to the contestants and shared her experience at the 2006 competition.

"Being Miss Teen has given me so much confidence. Before this, I was really shy and often times standing somewhere at the back. But since my experience, I have gained so much confidence," Borja said.

She added that she has grown to appreciate herself more and have found herself to want to help the people more in the CNMI and the community.

"All in all, it really was a great experience," Borja said.

Stellar Marianas Reina Camacho said Miss Marianas Teen is an experience and not "just an opportunity where you can move on once you're through with the competition."

She added that former contestants have found themselves to be more outgoing and more confident.

"You will even find the willingness to try new things and meet new people," Camacho said.

Boyer shared that the CNMI has as much capability as any other country in the world to become Miss international or Miss Universe.

"We have so many beautiful young ladies in the CNMI and we want to show that," she said.

Boyer also added that no contestant should feel discouraged if they are not crowned the title of Miss Marianas Teen.

She gave an example of former international contestants who have "dedicated their lives to the pageant."

"Brooke Lee has competed seven times before she was crowned Miss Universe," said Boyer.

This year's Miss Marianas Teen theme is "Urban Glamour Girl."

"We wanted to try something a little bit different. Traditionally, it's been the island but this time we're going to go straight to the heart of the city," said Boyer.

Rehearsals will begin Jan. 12 and then every weekend before the competition thereafter.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ
Stellar Marianas officials and organizers talk to 2008 Miss Teen Marianas prospective candidates during a pageant briefing at the Hard Rock Café in Garapan Saturday afternoon.

Matson raises fuel surcharge

Matson Navigation Co. is boosting its fuel surcharge to 31.5 percent, citing unprecedented global demands for oil that continues to drive up the costs of fuel.

The 2.5 percentage point increase to the current 29 percent surcharge takes effect Feb. 4 for its Hawaii, Guam/Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Micronesia services.

"This adjustment is a necessary action due to fuel costs remaining at extraordinary levels," Dave Hoppes, Matson senior vice president of ocean services, said in a letter to customers yesterday.

The state's largest ocean carrier also is raising the cost of shipping vehicles between Honolulu and the mainland on Jan. 6.

In late 2006 and early 2007, Matson had three consecutive decreases in its fuel surcharge, but that trend dramatically reversed later last year.

Matson's latest increase is less than that announced by rival Horizon Lines Inc., the state's second-largest ocean shipper, which said before Christmas that it planned to raise its fuel surcharge by 3 percentage points to a record 32 percent on Feb. 4.

Horizon last month said it was beginning to see signs that fuel costs would taper off, though spokesman Kuuhaku Park yesterday declined to comment on whether it would respond to Matson's latest move.

Reggie Maldonado, general manager of Pasha Hawaii Transport Lines, the state's third-largest ocean carrier, didn't return calls for comment. Pasha increased its fuel surcharge 3 percentage points last month to 26 percent.

The demand for fuel by emerging countries such as China and India—where much of the population is becoming middle-class citizens—is the underlying reason for the pressure on global petroleum and spike in fuel costs, said Bank of Hawaii economist Paul Brewbaker.

"The transition from being really poor to middle-class in global standards tends to be reflected in a much larger increase in energy consumption," he said. "On average people used to make $200 a year, now people are making $1,000 a year. They're starting to have more light bulbs, getting mopeds, buying cars."

Brewbaker doesn't anticipate any change in the upward trend.

"These oil prices keep inching forward and they keep having to tack on fuel surcharges (to consumers)," he said, adding that oil was $20 a barrel just five years ago.

The good news is there are fewer people in the world that are dirt poor, but it does mean their consumption is growing very rapidly, putting pressure on some of these prices," he said. "However, higher prices also are a signal to producers to figure out better ways to be more productive."
(Honolulu Star Bulletin)

TENTH CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41; the State Board of Education hereby gives notice that a Regular and Inaugural Meetings of the State Board will be held on Monday, January 14, 2008, 8:30 a.m. at BOE Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Retirement Fund Building, Saipan

AGENDA
Posting of Colors
National Anthem
Inspirational Speech

REGULAR TENTH CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Preliminary Matters: Call To Order; Roll Call and Adoption of Agenda
BOE Chair's Opening Remarks
Recognition of Service
Special Remarks of Outgoing BOE Members
Recognition of Incoming BOE Members
Oath of Office

ELEVENTH CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Special Remarks of Incoming BOE Members
Election of Officers
Adjournment
Retirement of Colors

Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

INTERESTED PERSONS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND AND TO SUBMIT WRITTEN OR ORAL COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE AGENDA ITEMS.

For more information contact the Board Office at Tel. No. 237-3010 or Fax No. 664-3711.

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE NMC 1981

Network with other professionals!

Learn about professional development opportunities!

Reconnect with former classmates!

NMC Alumni Meeting

Election of officers and Alumni Kickoff Event will be discussed...

January 10, 2008
6pm at the Student Center, Building J

All NMC graduates and former students (with at least 24 NMC academic credits) qualify to participate in the meeting and to receive:

➡ **Fee waiver for one transcript request!**
➡ **A chance to win great raffle prizes!**

Refreshments will be provided...

Northern Mariana Islands RETIREMENT FUND

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC, Division 9, §9910, Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the NMI Retirement Fund Board of Trustees/Workers' Compensation Commission/Group Health & Life Insurance Trust Fund, are hereby giving notice that the Board of Trustees will hold its regular meeting on Thursday, January 10, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at the NMI Retirement Fund Conference Room, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
A. Call to Order
B. Roll Call
C. Adoption of Agenda
D. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting:
1. December 04, 2007
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
III. REPORTS
A. Report of the Chairman
1. ROC No. 08-003
B. Report of the Administrator / Correspondence
1. ROA No. 08-003
C. Report of the Comptroller
1. Financials
a) NMIRF
b) GHLITF
c) WCC
D. Reports of the Committees
1. Finance & Investment Committee
2. Operations & Personnel Committee
3. Policies, Programs & Legislative Review Committee
4. GH&L and WCC Committee
E. Reports of the Investment Director
1. Status of Investment/Market Condition
2. Report of Housing Loan Program
3. Bank of Saipan Issues
4. CGECU
F. Communications
G. Other Matters
IV. LEGAL MATTERS
A. Reports of the Legal Counsels
1. Report of the Board Counsel
2. Report of the In-house Counsel
a) Update on Administrative Appeals
3. Report of the Hearing Officer
V. OLD BUSINESS
1. BR 08-001
2. DC Plan
3. Pension Software
4. Travel Policy
5. Internal Auditor Status
6. IAC
7. Rota and Tinian office space
VI. NEW BUSINESS
1. Drawdown Request
a) December 05, 2007
b) December 21, 2007
2. WCC – Proposed Regulations
VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
VIII. MISCELLANEOUS
A. Announcements
B. Next Meeting
C. Adjournment

/s/ JUAN T. GUERRERO
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP 08-008 Real Property Appraisal
RFP 08-009 Construction Marine/Mari-Culture Center

Northern Marianas College is soliciting sealed proposals for:

1. Appraisal of Real Property belonging to the NMC.
2. Construction of Pau Pau Beach Marine and Mari-Culture Center.

Specifications and Scope of Work may be picked up at the NMC Procurement Office, bldg. N Room 4, Monday to Friday between the hours of 8: 30-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:30 p.m. For Off-island Proposers, you may request a copy via fax or e-mail.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The NMC reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals for any reason and waive any defect in said proposals, or cancel in part or its entirety this RFP, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College.

All costs incurred by the proposer to prepare a response this solicitation and subsequent inquiries shall be borne by the proposer.

RFP 08-008 is due January 25, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. and RFP 08-009 is due February 01, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Saipan time at the Northern Marianas College, Procurement Office, P.O. Box 501250, Saipan, MP 96950.

All submittals shall become the property of NMC and shall not be returned.

Duane R.T. Sablan
Procurement & Property Management Office

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

Looking back at the Mariana Islands the past 62 years

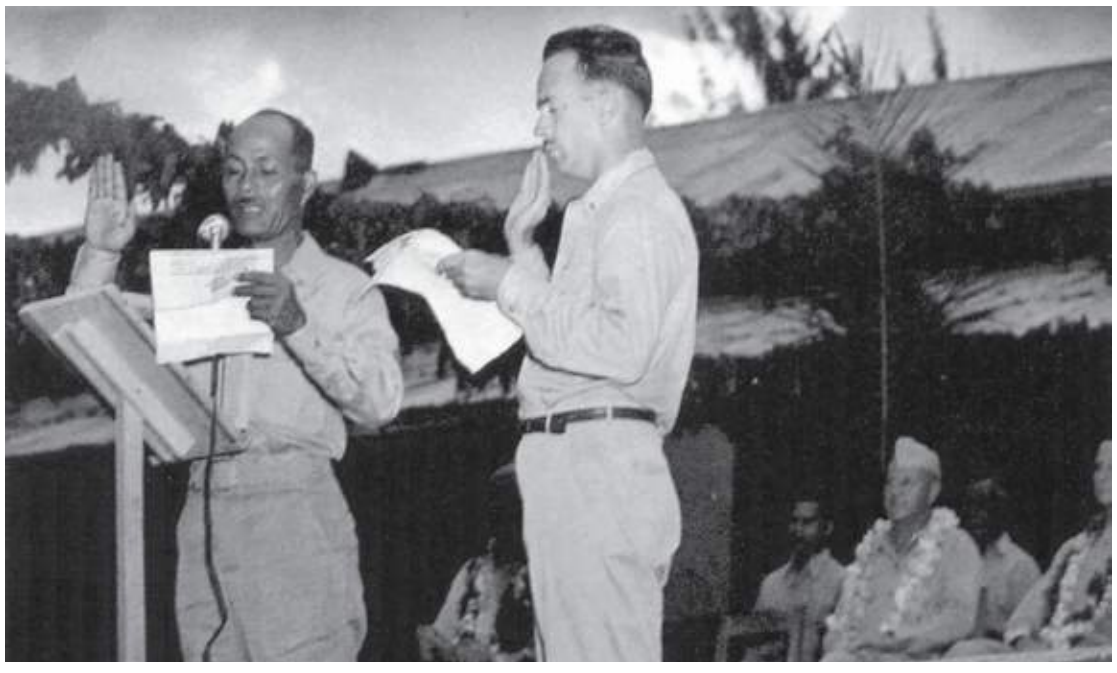


PHOTO BY DMS

Swearing in of Mayor Elias P. Sablan in 1945 at Chalan Kanoa Elementary School. Administering the Oath of Office is Lt. (jg) John J. Horan USN. Mr. Horan was a former police officer in Manhattan, New York.

MVA holds yearend workshop in Korea

Marianas Visitors Authority held a 2007 yearend workshop at Muju Resort in Korea. The goal of the workshop was to promote the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota to tour agents and to award the winner for the volume incentive program.

Forty-two people attended the workshop including representatives from Mode Tour, Hana Tour, Lotte Tour, Tour 2000, Yellow-balloon, Sejoong Tourmall, KTB, Land Star, P&J, i-Tour and E&F Tour.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Forty-two people attended a 2007 yearend workshop Marianas Visitors Authority held at Muju Resort in Korea.

MVA did a presentation about the islands and six hotels talked specifically about their properties. The participating hotels were Pacific Islands Club Saipan, World Resort, Fiesta Resort & Spa, Aqua Resort Club, Marianas Resort & Spa, and Rota Resort & Country Club.

The winner of the volume incentive program was Mode Tour. During the months of October and November, Mode Tour sent 3,453 tourists to CNMI and received KRW 9,791,000 (USD $10,430) as incentive. Hana Tour sent 3,065 tourists and received KRW 9,382,000(USD $9,990). The third place went to Yellow-balloon.

"We applaud the efforts of the agents in Korea and congratulate the winners," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "Our Korean arrivals soared in 2007 and our partners played a significant role in the increase." ***(MVA)***

Beautify CNMI: Off to a busy start in 2008

By ANGELO VILLAGOMEZ
CORRESPONDENT

Beautify CNMI volunteers were busy trimming trees, picking up litter, and cleaning out clogged storm water drains this weekend.

On Saturday morning volunteers including Miss Teen CNMI Kayla Atalig and her mom, pfficer Tricia Seman, participated in the monthly cleanup of the Garapan Tourist District. The volunteers swept the side streets and scoured the area for litter.

The area with the most litter this month was the abandoned Camacho property. The volunteers removed bottles and other trash from the area, but according to volunteer Carl Brachear, "Something needs to be done about this place."

Brachear spent much of the morning trimming the trees along Coral Street. Ironically, Brachear found that all of the coral trees, the trees for which the street is named, have been infected with a wasp and are dying.

Brachear wants to replace the trees, but says that they will have to wait because the dry season is about to begin. The dry season is not a good time to plant trees.

Friends of the Mariana Islands (FMI), Kinpachi Restaurant, and PDM Promoters lead the Garapan Tourist District cleanup on the first weekend of every month. Volunteers from MINA also participated.

On Sunday morning, CNMI Power carried out their monthly cleanup of the Garapan area around Garapan Elementary School. Led by President Ladyvir Canape, this was the 12th consecutive month cleaning up their adopted spot. Volunteers filled an entire pickup bed with litter.

Also on Sunday, FMI started their drainage clearing project of Tun Joaquin Doi Road in Fina Sisu. Sponsored by Mobil, the 16 volunteers used shovels and machetes to remove sediment and vegetation that was clogging the drainage ditches that drain the road. The road floods when the drains get clogged.

This project will continue for the next few weeks until the culverts and drains are clear of debris. For more information on Beautify CNMI activites visit www.beautifycnmi.com.

Angelo Villagomez is the Executive Director of MINA

CHRISTMAS PARTY CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

JET Holdings held its employees Christmas party last Dec. 27 at the back of J's Restaurant along Middle Road. Photos above show Juan S. Santiago with family and employees enjoying the party.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 7, 1999

CDA calls on gov't to protect garment industry

Commonwealth Development Authority Chairman Juan S. Tenorio calls upon the local government to come up with measures that will cushion the garment industry from the worsening global economic turmoil. He issued the statement amid proposals to increase anew garment factories' user fee in a veiled attempt to raise more revenues for the cash-strapped government. "They should not be hasty in making drastic changes. Increasing user fee for the garment industry will not be good at this time. They should just leave it alone and make sure that everybody is following the standard," Tenorio said.

Commerce retracts statement

The Department of Commerce yesterday retracted an earlier statement warning the public against buying the insurance policies of two companies based in the United States. In a press release, Commerce Secretary Frankie B. Villanueva said the American Fidelity Life Insurance Co. of Pensacola, Florida and Trans World Assurance Co., of San Mateo, California have been cleared of the pending cases filed before the two companies.

January 7, 2002

Saipan roads safer DPS: No alcohol related-fatality in 2001

Saipan's alcohol-related fatality was recorded zero in 2001, a historical first for the island in 15 years. The Department of Public Safety reported last week that traffic-related deaths in Saipan alone have declined from 1986 to 2001, closing at a total of 59 fatalities. But each year in the last 15 years, the police noted that alcohol-related fatalities covered a percentage of the traffic deaths, except in the year that just ended. At the close of 2001, there has been zero alcohol-related fatality, one traffic crash fatality and one non-traffic fatality, records from the DPS Traffic Section revealed.

Korean Air returns on Saturday

The much-anticipated return of Korean Airlines will finally happen this Saturday, at 2am, with the arrival of the first flight that will herald the resumption of direct flight services between Seoul and the Commonwealth. Marianas Visitors Authority officials and local dignitaries will be on hand to welcome the return of Korean Airlines' Seoul-Saipan flight. "The Korea-CNMI daily route will be providing additional seating capacity of more than 2,000 seats per week," said Vicky I. Benavente, acting managing director of MVA. Benavente said it was a welcome sign of hope for the local tourism industry.

January 7, 2004

Stateless kids issue resurrects

Though asserting belief that there are actually no stateless children in the CNMI, Sen. Thomas P. Villagomez said Tuesday it is high time that the local government does something about the estimated 100 persons who were born in the CNMI between 1978 and 1986 and were not granted U.S. citizenships. He conceded that the CNMI does not have the right to confer U.S. citizenship on these "stateless children" but he said the local government can take the lead in lobbying with Congress to pass a measure that would make these people U.S. citizens. At the same time, he said a bill could be passed that would exempt these children from the requirements of the Nonresident Workers Act.

House passes new FY04 budget bill

Addressing the need to provide funding to new schools and the juvenile detention facility on Saipan, the House passed yesterday morning a new budget bill for fiscal year 2004, which retained the funding level at $213.95 million. It, however, contained minor amendments that included reinstating the $1.2 million that had been slashed from the $12.5 million funding for Rota. Since House Bill 13-374 is substantially the same as the original budget bill that the Legislature had passed in October 2003, the lower chamber passed the new spending plan in quick fashion, without the lengthy debates that happen during budget deliberations. The CNMI government had entered the new fiscal year in October 2003 without a budget after Gov. Juan N. Babauta vetoed House Bill 13-335, the original budget bill, due to questions over the legality of the passage of the bill. At that time, the Senate was locked in a power struggle and H.B. 13-335 was acted on by the bloc of Senate minority leader Pete Reyes.

Pacific

New Caledonia seeks new anthem, 'identity'

SUVA, Fiji (Oceania Flash)—Authorities in New Caledonia have officially launched a quest, by way of a public contest, in order to identify what is locally referred to as "identity symbols", namely a national anthem, a motto and a design for its future banknotes.

Those symbols are part of an autonomy path set out in the 1998 autonomy Nouméa Accord.

The Accord was signed by both pro-French and pro-independence parties, as well as the French government.

For the first time, the preamble of the Accord also recognised the identity of New Caledonia's Kanak, indigenous people.

The public contest was launched two weeks ago and entries and submissions are scheduled to close at the end of February.

The competition is open to all residents of New Caledonia

It allows for the usage of both French and Kanak indigenous languages.

The national anthem, a musical score yet to be identified, could last between two and five minutes.

After that date, a so-called "identity signs steering committee" (officially formed in April 2007) will select hat they will regard as the successful entries and make recommendations to the local government.

The Nouméa Accord contains such notions as "common destiny", "power sharing" between the French Pacific territory's main ethnic groups (the descendents of French settlers, known as the "Caldoche" and the indigenous Kanaks).

But the public competition does not concern as yet the other two future identity signs of New Caledonia, generally regarded as the most sensitive ones: the name of a future independent New Caledonia and its flag.

Instead, New Caledonia's government, has decided leave the difficult task of debating the touchy issue to the "identity signs steering committee".

For New Caledonia's future flag, one of the most appealing, yet controversial options, was to adopt the colourful flag from the pro-independence FLNKS (Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front)

Regarded as the most elaborate flag to date, the blue, red, green and yellow flag, bearing the traditional Kanak roofing arrow, is also regarded by many, on the pro-French side, as too independence-loaded.

An envisaged compromise, inspired from the presence of the United Kingdom's Union Jack on many independent Pacific island States, could be to blend the Kanak symbols with a French flag-inspired blue, white and red colour code, possibly as a watermark.

Another option, reported in the daily newspaper Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes, would make the exercise even more tricky: it would be to integrate another dimension, that of the European Union (since New Caledonia's because of its dependence from France, is also classified in the European Union's OCTs -Overseas Countries and Territories-) in New Caledonia's future flag.

For New Caledonia's future name, the exercise could also prove tricky, since the most elaborate and original form of name is also closely link to the FLNKS's independence philosophy: suggestions so far are to merge or associate the current name, New Caledonia, with the term "Kanaky".

Brisbane court releases Moti on $88,000 bail

HONOLULU (Pacific Islands Report)—An Australian newspaper reports that former Solomon Islands Attorney General Julian Moti has been released on bail following a hearing in a Brisbane court.

Moti, who was deported by the Solomons last week to face charges of rape in Vanuatu, reportedly was released on AU$100,000 [US$88,227] bail.

Australian newspaper The Age did not identify Moti by name, saying he could not be named under Queensland law. He was identified as a lawyer and former Solomons official who was deported last week over a 1997 charge of rape in Vanuatu.

His defence lawyer, the Gold Coast's Chris Nyst, said a magistrate in Vanuatu had already dismissed the charges in August 1999.

Moti in October 2006 fled the Solomons just weeks after being named attorney general. He was arrested by police in Papua New Guinea but found sanctuary at the Solomons Embassy in Port Moresby until his clandestine return to the Solomons, where he remained a close ally of former Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare until last week's deportation to Australia.

Moti reportedly must stay with his parents in Sydney and report to police there every day as conditions of his bail. He must also surrender all passports and travel documents, The Age reported.

In granting bail, Ms Payne said the charges were almost 10 years old and that the accused had previously been on bail for 15 months when the charges were first raised in Vanuatu and he had not breached the bail conditions at that time.

The accused will appear in court again for a committal on February 15.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

American Samoa cannery tax credits cut from bill

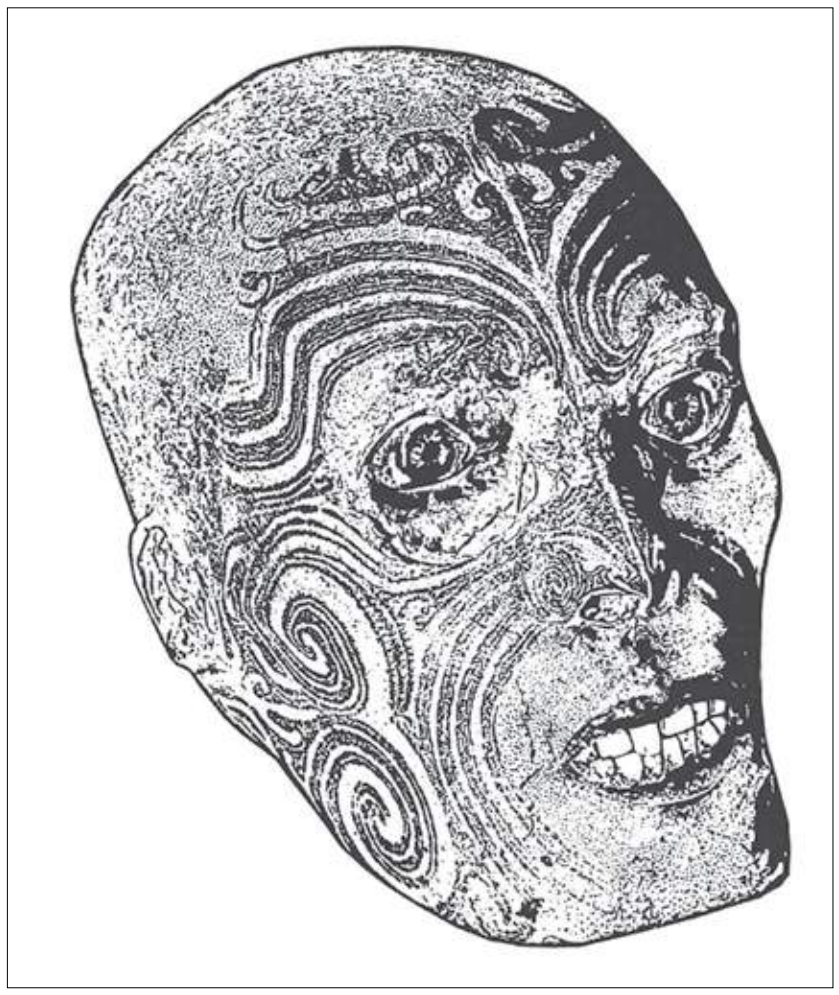
WELLINGTON, New Zealand (Radio New Zealand International)—There are reports in American Samoa that the U.S. Senate has cut the canneries tax credit extension from a congressional measure, approved this week by President Bush. The canneries' current tax credit 30A, which expires on the last day of 2007, requires the canneries to make their tax claims based on wage credits. Last month the U.S. House passed a measure which included a one-year extension of 30A tax credits for American Samoa's canneries as well as one-year extensions for other federal tax programs. Samoa News reports the federal measure was amended by the U.S. Senate and deleted the canneries extension as well as extensions of other federal programmes. However, the newspaper says that when a new bill passes, with the extension, the tax credits will be retroactive, just like the last time and the canneries won't lose any money

Conservationists fight PNG plantation project

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (Radio New Zealand International)—Activists from all over the world have petitioned Papua New Guinea not to grant a licence to allow Woodlark Island's rainforests to be cleared to make way for oil palm plantations. *The Post Courier* newspaper reports that a letter to the prime minister, Sir Michael Somare, has been sent to countries around the world, including PNG embassies and various government departments in PNG. The letter says that clearing Woodlark Island's rainforests for oil palm plantations will turn a biodiverse paradise into a lifeless monoculture and environmental disaster. It asks that the project's approval be immediately withdrawn as it is clearly at odds with PNGs public international statements in support of rainforest and climate protection. The letter suggests that if Sir Michael is unable to lead on establishing strict rainforest protections in Papua New Guinea then he should step aside.

PNG's Somare due in Fiji for private visit

SUVA, Fiji (Fijilive)—Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare will be arriving in Fiji at midday today on a three day private visit. Foreign Affairs minister Ratu Epeli Nailatikau told fijilive that he will be at the Nausori Airport at midday to greet Sir Michael. "He (Sir Michael Somare) is on a holiday," he said. Asked whether he will be meeting the interim Prime Minister Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama, Ratu Epeli said "there's no plans for that as yet but if he wishes to visit the PM he can do so". Ratu Epeli added that Sir Michael is expected to go to Australia and New Zealand after his visit to Fiji. The PNG embassy in Fiji has no comments. Sir Michael had been holidaying in Tonga as a guest of his Tongan counterpart Dr Feleti Sevele and the Princess Regent, Salote Pilolevu Tuita. Sir Michael and Dr Sevele had been discussing the kind of assistance that they can provide to Fiji for her full return to democracy.



NEW ZEALAND WARRIORS HEAD AP

In this handout image provided by the Rouen town hall, is a drawing of a tattooed Maori head from New Zealand, in this Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2007 file image. The city of Rouen, France, pledged Thursday, Jan. 3, 2008, to find a way to return a preserved, tattooed Maori head to New Zealand, even after a court ruled that it must stay in France. The city has been trying to return the head to New Zealand for months, though its attempts angered national officials. The culture minister said Rouen could not make such a decision unilaterally.

Marshalls lawmakers to choose new president

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (Radio New Zealand International)—The Marshall Islands parliament meets on Monday for the first time since the November 19th national election to elect a new President.

It is the first time in the 29 years of constitutional government that there is no clear winner from the national election, with both major political parties attempting to put together a coalition government.

The ruling United Democratic Party lost its 20-seat majority in the parliament, but the opposition Aelon Kein Ad (Our Islands) party also failed to win a majority leaving the balance of power in the hands of five independents.

Officials with the UDP say that President Kessai Note will not seek a third term and will be replaced by a UDP-aligned candidate who will draw the support of the independents to get the 17-vote majority needed for Monday's election.

But AKA officials say they will elect Speaker Litokwa Tomeing, who defected from the UDP before the election.

New Fiji national council to have 45 members

SUVA, Fiji (Fijilive)—The proposed National Council for Building a Better Fiji (NCBBF) will have a total membership of 45, the interim regime has revealed.

It will comprise members of a number of civil society organisations, provincial councils and the Government.

Permanent secretary in the Prime Minister's office, Parmesh Chand said 13 invitees out of the 24 had so far confirmed their participation in the council.

He said there were a few who had declined the offer whereas quite a number of others were undecided due to fear of travel bans.

He added there were 8 nominees from the Minister for Fijian Affairs to represent the 14 provinces.

"There will be 3 more invites sent to represent the grassroots people," Chand said.

He said the duration of the membership was as long as their services would be required for the development of the People's Charter for Change and Progress, and thereafter for pursuance of dialogue, consensus building, coordination and monitoring of charter implementation.

He confirmed the first meeting of the council had been scheduled for January 16.

Chand said preparatory work including the deployment of required civil servants to man the secretariat was being pursued in earnest.

He said five positions had also been advertised in the Technical and Administrative Support Secretariat (TASS), and would be appointed outside of the civil service.

He said the five posts include the head of TASS, 3 national task team coordinators, and a head of public relations and media team.

"The task team coordinators will focus on 3 key areas that is good governance, growing the economy and social, cultural, identity, and nation building," Chand said.

"Their first task will be to prepare the report on the state of the nation and the economy. This report will provide us with a comprehensive stock-take diagnosis of the nature and depth of the problems which the nation faces," he said.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Purple promises

Understandably, much has been made of the Iowa caucus results as a reflection of voters' desire for change. Both winners, Republican Mike Huckabee and Democrat Barack Obama, took on their parties' establishments, and both promise a new era in Washington. But the two share something else as well: a commitment, at least in rhetoric, to transcend partisanship and unite Republicans and Democrats. What's less evident is the basis for those claims.

Huckabee, the former Arkansas governor, noted in his victory speech Thursday night that voters weren't opting for just any change. What voters seek, he said, is to "bring this country back together, to make Americans, once again, more proud to be Americans than just to be Democrats or Republicans." Similarly, Obama, the freshman senator from Illinois, told his supporters that "you came together as Democrats, Republicans and independents, to stand up and say that we are one nation ... we are not a collection of red states and blue states."

For both candidates, personality is an important component of the bipartisan appeal. Huckabee's genial, self-deprecating humor, offering a contrast to the post-Sept. 11 sternness of the Cheney-Giuliani variety, could appeal to many independents. Obama to an even greater degree offers himself—his life story, his Kansan mother and Kenyan father, his ability to lift up and inspire—as a unifying force. In his breathtakingly eloquent victory speech Thursday, Obama said Iowa would be remembered as "the moment when we tore down barriers that have divided us for too long, when we rallied people of all parties and ages to a common cause."

But what cause, precisely? There's virtually nothing in Obama's platform that diverges from the standard, left-wing Democratic fare. He promised again Thursday not to "just tell you what you want to hear, but what you need to know." But virtually nothing he says is dissonant to liberal ears; in foreign policy, trade policy, education policy, fiscal policy, there is nothing with a nod to the possibility of good ideas in the red-state playbook.

Huckabee might appeal to Democratic voters with his recognition, unique among Republican candidates, that life can be tough for working Americans. His economic populism at times echoed that of Democratic candidate John Edwards. But his chief economic plank, the so-called FairTax that would replace all existing federal taxes, would be skewed against the middle class and for the rich. To the extent that his positions in Iowa could be seen as reaching out to Democrats, they were appealing to fears—not hopes—that Democrats may share with Republicans: fear of immigrants, fear of globalization. And, unlike in Obama's case, Huckabee's rhetoric is at times divisive—most notably when he portrays himself as the Christian candidate.

The very fact of a black man triumphing in majority-white America, as Obama triumphed in white Iowa, would carry huge and happy significance here and abroad. But those who argue that his biography and charisma are sufficient arguments for Obama's election patronize him in a way he does not seek.

It may be that voters sense in the candidates' instincts and histories a nonpartisanship that, in the hunt for primary voters, neither aspirant dares display. Voters might find such hints in Huckabee's support, as governor, for children's health care; or in Obama's earlier statements on trade or accountability in education, more nuanced than his campaign positions. But now that Obama is the front-runner, and Huckabee is at least a leading candidate, hints are not enough, and neither are promises to bring the nation together. Both should be asked just how they plan to do so.

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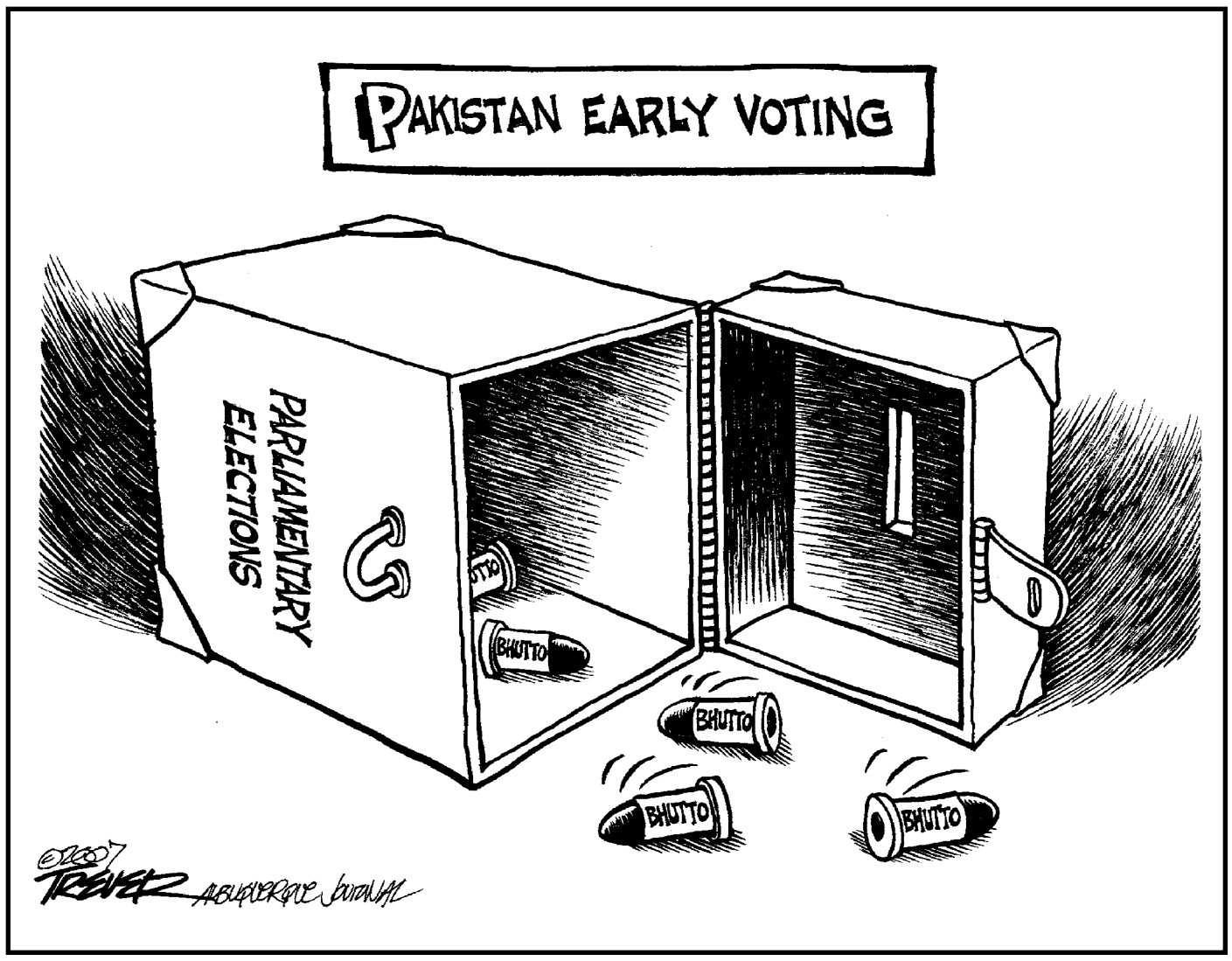


An open letter to our legislators Part I

Dear Honorable Legislators,

ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

Congratulations to you all for being elected our legislators. For the next two years you will manage the future and fortune of our community by the decisions you make. You possess awesome power to improve our community and our lives. Your impact on us is monumental. Hopefully, the discussion below will help remind you of your power and duty.

Being a politician is a duty, not a job. As a good soldier pledges his duty to his country, each of you must pledge your duty the same way. We have chosen you because we believe and trust in you. Of all the virtues, "trust" is one of the most important ones. And to betray the trust bestowed in you by the people is one of the most heinous crimes you can commit against constituents. Someone once said: "The man who does not trust himself can never trust anyone." What is left after trust is lost?

You are the catalyst and hope for leading us back to prosperity. But before you can do that you must realize exactly what your functions at the Legislature are and how powerful you are. I hope that all of you will cut out the following pledge and place it squarely in the middle of your desk and glance at it daily:

"I have been chosen and given the trust to represent the people of the CNMI. My duty is to help the people. I pledge to place this duty above all else. I shall seek only what is good for the general pubic. I will never sacrifice my duty for personal gain or personal agendas—so help me God!"

Basically, the way I understand your function, you, the Legislature as a whole, decide what happens in our community. Everything starts with you. Bills having to do with money, bills having to do with conduct affecting us citizens, bills approving appointments to government agencies, bills affecting education, bills affecting taxes, bills affecting businesses, bills for budget expenditures, bills for everything! When these bills become laws they dictate our course of action. It all starts with you gentlemen! It is what you decide for us citizens that shapes our quality of life and the economic current.

The administration then implements and enforces the laws that you create. It does not create laws that govern us. It only carries them out. Remember you have the power to override any veto the governor tries to impose on any of your bills. It fact, the Administration is often rebuffed by you if the laws you pass don't produce the results intended. In many ways you, the legislators, dictate to the administration what you want done by the awesome power you possess.

The courts only interpret the laws that you create to make sure they are in accordance with the Constitution. Frankly speaking, unless a law is bluntly against the Constitution, the court rarely interferes with your duties.

At times, it amazes me when you, esteemed ladies and gentlemen, forget this or do not fully grasp this basic concept. Your actions and attitudes sets the tone for all of us citizens. You are the beginning of all activity of the community by the type of laws you create and the manner in which you conduct yourselves. You are the backbone for economic development or the lack of it because you decide what types and to what extent businesses can be conducted here. In plain words: **You—the legislature—possess tremendous power over this island and over our lives!**

At times it appears that you sorely neglect those basic duties and instead point your finger at the administrative branch or blame outside forces when things don't go right. You feel that the administration should search for new businesses and tell the current ones how to operate. When business doesn't go right, you shout that the administration is anti-business. Yet, it probably was what you did or did not do to promote business. A recent case in point is the new labor law. You passed that law and will have to accept its consequences. Your decisions indicate that the administration should lead and direct all the activities of our community. But without your approval it cannot happen.

No, I am not trying to justify the administration's position in any actions. I am merely pointing out that you are the real power. Yes, you are the beginning of all basic activities and the hope for the future, for it is in your halls of legislature that decisions are made that affect our destiny. The manner in which you conduct legislative affairs sets the direction of the CNMI. You must lead. Please understand this and assume your rightful function.

We, the private citizens, look on in amazement at the antics that sometimes go on in your legislative halls. Some of you have personal agendas. Some of you have no agendas but simply play follow the leader whoever he is and wherever he leads. Some of you simply tread water and do little if anything at all. All the while you enjoy the pomp and ceremony and financial benefits that go with your office.

Many times there is little unified cooperation. We all know that without a unified goal, we simply cannot achieve what this

See AN OPEN on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Letters to the Editor

The future and 16th Legislature

Congratulations are in order for OUR Representatives and Senators for being elected or re-elected to the Legislature. The only thing I want to say to you is that I pray you have learned from the many mistakes of previous legislatures. In the words of the History Channel, *"if we don't learn from our mistakes in history, we are DOOMED to repeat them*." The 15th Legislature didn't learn the lessons of economics taught in history or we would be well on the path to recovery after two years under their leadership. But it didn't happen even though the Legislature and the governor were given the mandate to "FIX" the economy when they were elected.

The "lackadaisical planning and last-minute band aids" to address our social and economic woes by the previous legislatures MUST STOP! We (the PEOPLE) are depending on the 16th Legislature to have wisdom, vision, and a real plan for our economic recovery by diversifying our tourist industry and creating new industries for the CNMI. The single-most inhibiting factor of the 15th Legislature was obvious—they didn't collectively know what to do about the economy, which is why they immediately surrendered ALL expenditure power to the governor at the beginning of his term even though it was the fiduciary responsibility of the Lower House to maintain control of spending. Our 15th Legislature didn't know what to do and wouldn't let the people they work for tell them what to do—so nothing got done in the Legislature to improve our economy over the past two years only a lazy and last-minute effort to institute gaming. There was never an Economic Taskforce, which should have been the FIRST thing created by the 15th Legislature, nor was there a single public meeting to determine what kinds of industries or developments are needed to improve our economy, which is why Gaming ended up being the choice of the leaders without the people's consent because the investors found us to get what they wanted instead of our leaders finding investors for what we (the people) wanted—duh!

I'm sure the lawyers that will be replacing the "picnic table geniuses" of the 15th Legislature will not sit still for the people being ignored as we have been in the past because the most important thing the Legislature can do is to determine *"what the people want them to do"* to get us all on the same page and wanting the same thing —one people, one direction, and there is no escaping this if we want to achieve real progress. As long as we (the people) are divided and our leaders are also divided and uncertain about our own well being and what we want for our economic future, progress will continue to be elusive for the people of the CNMI and that's common sense.

The future of our economy is clearly the point of question for everyone in the CNMI and we (the people) will be offering a mandate petition to the 16th Legislature that I'm sure will be helpful in determining the direction for the future of the CNMI's economy. The future of the villages must also be addressed by the 16th Legislature, which has been totally ignored for almost a decade. For example, people still have to travel from Tanapag and Kagman and other villages to the other side of the island just to pay "public bills and to pick up mail" and the price of gas is not going down. The Kagman peninsular is the largest residential district in the CNMI yet there are NO public services other than water, power and schools—Tanapag still needs a junior and high school and its an older community than Kagman. We had eight people representing Kagman in the 15th Legislature and they did virtually NOTHING for Kagman.

We built three schools in Kagman with no plans to build a gymnasium or a field for sports like track and football. The Legislature didn't even identify the land so that tells us a lot about the lack of planning for the actual facilities in the villages. The Legislature chose to build sidewalks where NO ONE walks in Puerto Rico while our children at three schools in Kagman walk on the side of the road to school and sometimes its all weeds. People in these villages are not being provided the "basic public services" like a CUC payment office, a mail pick-up location if not mail delivery, Food Stamp Office, Library and many other social, medical and educational services and sports facilities that should have been included in the original planning of the Kagman community and other communities. We only have a grocery and clothing store in Kagman and no plans in the Legislature for the basic public services to be offered on the Kagman peninsular and in other villages. We not only need better governing from the 16th Legislature, we also need some public SERVICES.

If the 16th Legislature truly wants to address the "service" issues, they will yield the necessary power to the Saipan Municipal Council and Mayor to take charge of providing the public services as we have done on Tinian and Rota so the state legislature can really concentrate on the state issues like fixing our economy. The roads, DPS, and capital improvements for Saipan are truly the responsibility of the mayor and Municipal Council of Saipan not the state legislature other than providing funding. Too many of Saipan's local matters are being sidetracked by state politics and in most cases the local matters of Saipan are never even addressed by the State Legislature, which is why nothing is changing at the local level on Saipan.

The future under federalization has been a "stigma" of the 15th Legislature and its all because the Legislature failed to find out what the majority of the people they represented wanted in regards to federalization. To this very day, a consensus still hasn't been formed even though the first thing the feds asked us to do was to establish a consensus on what we (the people) wanted or desired with the implementation of federal measures. The 15th Legislature didn't have ONE public meeting on federalization—not even a poll or survey. The feds actually tried harder than our own officials to determine the consensus, which is why they visited the CNMI more in the last year than they have since the conception of the Commonwealth. But the 15th Legislature still didn't get it and we (the people) are hopeful the 16th Legislature will get it—the majority of people voted to become part of America because they wanted to live under federal standards with a quality of life equal to our counterparts on the mainland and to do so we MUST stop fighting with the feds—its common sense.

The 15th Legislature could only offer us gaming and a failed legacy but I'm sure the people are hopeful the past has certainly taught the future leaders some very important lessons and the only question that remains to be answered is did the members of the 16th Legislature learn from the mistakes of the 15th Legislature or we are DOOMED to repeat the same mistakes in the future. One people, one direction.

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman

Include parallel parking in driving exam

I am of the opinion that parallel parking should be included in the BMV driving exam. This activity is a good way to evaluate how well the prospective licensed driver handles his or her vehicle. Additionally, there are areas in the CNMI that require drivers to park their vehicle parallel to a curb. Perhaps the parking lot behind the BMV could be utilized to evaluate this maneuver.

To see how poorly this is presently being done, one only needs to walk down Beach Road in the Garapan shopping area. There you would find more often than not, vehicles not parked within 18 inches from the curb as required by law.

Another factor pertaining to this topic is the fact that many drivers in the CNMI do not seem to know that they are required to stop and allow the person who is trying to parallel park their vehicle, to do so.

When I am out with my students practicing this maneuver, I must tell them to be conscious of the fact that many of the drivers behind our vehicle will not wait; i.e.; they choose to drive around the vehicle that is attempting to park. This is not only incorrect; it could potentially, create an accident.

It is my hope that requiring new drivers to understand and execute this skill will help to educate those individuals whom do not seem to understand the proper procedure in this situation.

Finally, the inclusion of parallel parking in the driving test would be consistent with driving exams given on the mainland.

Richard Puhalla
ISTS Driver Training Academy
Susupe

The right choice!

I was just admiring reading the article written by *Saipan Tribune* about Ms. Lisa P. Sablan, owner, Sablan Topline Cleaners.

I couldn't help letting this go by without contributing something on her behalf. One thing for sure, you made the right decision about recognizing her company and awarding her the Small Business Person of the Year (so deserving).

Ms. Sablan may have a small business but she has a big heart. It is true that she always and I mean always shy away from the spotlight of the media and the public. Most of the time she would rather have her daughter represent her company and her employees be in the limelight while admiring them from behind the scene.

She has always expressed her heartfelt appreciation to those employees who excel in doing their work the right way. She may not be seen around all the time but she does maintain contact and continues to help her employees achieve what is expected of them.

One thing to mention too was the fact that Ms. Sablan's company has received recognition from the Commonwealth Health Center for A JOB WELL DONE every year at least during the times that my good friend Joseph Kevin P. Villagomez was secretary.

Upon Kevin's return as secretary of Public Health again, Ms. Sablan's company continues to serve our hospital superbly well.

Maintaining cleanliness in a hospital is not an easy task but throughout the years, Sablan Topline Cleaners has kept our Commonwealth Health Center spic and span.

The hallways are clean from the walls to the windows and floors that shine and keeping the public bathrooms nice. Of all the hospitals I've visited throughout the years in the Pacific Islands, Hawaii, and the mainland United States while working for CHC, I have yet to find a hospital that is cleaner than the Commonwealth Health Center.

CONGRATULATIONS to Sablan Topline Cleaners your name speaks for itself! Happy New Year and may your business continue to prosper this year and many more!

Joaquin I. Taitano
Brooklyn, NY

Congratulations to Ms. Sablan

Please extend my congratulations to Ms. Lisa Sablan. I'm very proud of her for being a very successful business person. Looking forward to hearing from her soon!

Virginia "Ginny" Kamiyama Manglona
Las Vegas, Nevada

AN OPEN

From Page 10

community needs. Stand tall and be proud that have been elected to lead. Let us feel your strength and let us profit from your wisdom. Being a politician is a duty, not a job!

You, the Legislature, must assume the role you have chosen for yourself. When you campaigned, you promised to help revitalize this country. You must do away with any private agenda. You must put the CNMI ahead of any personal goals whether for your precinct or for yourself. The CNMI must take top priority in all your thoughts and actions. Unless you truly believe and show that in your actions, we will only go round and round in circles. To believe in something, you must live it!

Rarely do I hear of any of legislators greeting potential investors who visit our islands and encouraging them to invest here. How many of you travel to seek out Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, or other investors? You can do that as well as the governor. So why are you not doing it? Should he be our only salesman? Then when he does finally find one you rile at him because the terms are too sweet.

How many of you are trying to encourage local residents to develop the diamonds under their feet? We have so many opportunities that are not being developed because you are not encouraging the local people to do so. How many of you are actively trying to motivate local farmers to improve and increase their crop production? How many of you are tutoring our youth to reach out and make their dreams come true? How many of you feel the pain and despair that so many of our people feel? Are you trying to help them get off food stamps by encouraging them to learn a trade or skill? How many of you have dreams for the CNMI? You can make all this happen if you have the will and determination. Come on, gentlemen, help out. You have great power.

Your motto must be: **I have been chosen to lead! Duty to my country comes first**!

By your sincerity and commitment to our Commonwealth, we can once again rise like the legendary phoenix bird did from its own ashes. By being determined and acting in a unified manner and with your fine examples, we can overcome any seemingly insurmountable setback. Know your responsibilities and act accordingly.

May God grant you the courage to do the right thing. May He also grant you the wisdom to know what you can and cannot do. May He grant you the courage to lead bravely.

Next week let us discuss the character a true statesman should possess if he is to help his country rise to economic stability and create a harmonious community.

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼77°	▲81° ▼75°	▲81° ▼75°	▲81° ▼75°	▲80° ▼75

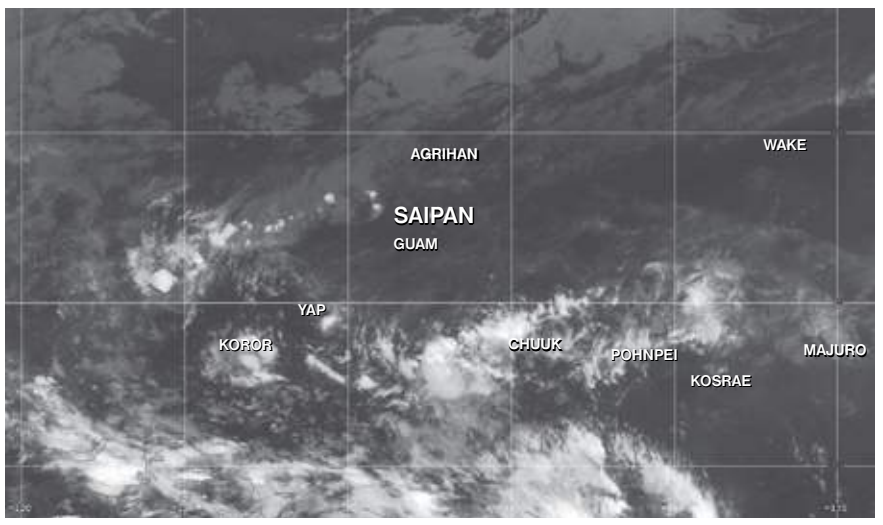
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Sunny	▲84	▼75
Palau	Rain	▲86	▼77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲88	▼79
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲86	▼76
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼75
Majuro	Cloudy	▲83	▼75

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲75	▼63
Beijing	Sunny	▲41	▼22
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲72	▼64
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲80	▼69
London	Partly Sunny	▲46	▼39
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲60	▼44
Manila	Cloudy	▲81	▼73
Melbourne	Sunny	▲79	▼61
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲78	▼67
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲53	▼45
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲51	▼36
Paris	Showers	▲49	▼40
Pusan	Sunny	▲51	▼30
Rome	Partly Sunny	▲55	▼35
Salem	Cloudy	▲42	▼38
San Francisco	Partly Sunny	▲52	▼46
Seoul	Partly Sunny	▲39	▼25
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲51	▼35
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲60	▼44

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, SUNDAY, JAN. 6, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front enters the northeast corner of the discussion area at 25N167E extends southwestward to 19n157E, then continues as a shearline through just north of Saipan near 16N146E to end at 11N134E. Widespread cloudiness and patchy light rain are found along and up to 300 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough stretches northwestward from EQ150E to south of Palau near 5N135E, then eastward to 5N130E and beyond. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring along the trough axis within 125 miles of a line from EQ151E to 7N140E to 5N131E. A surface trough branches northwestward from the near-equatorial trough south of Koror at 5N134E to 8N130E and beyond. Scattered showers are forming in the vicinity of the trough axis well northwest of Palau within 50 miles of a line from 11N130E to 14N134E. A surface trough of low pressure extends northeastward from 5N160E to 17N164E. Trade-wind convergence associated with this trough is producing scattered showers and a few thunderstorms across Chuuk, Pohnpei and just north of Kosrae between 5N and 11N from 150E to 165E. Mid to high level clouds from earlier convection can be seen from Kwajalein across Majuro to the dateline between 6N and 12N from 165E to 180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

01:02AM Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
08:24AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
01:24PM Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
05:59PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:45AM	6:01PM
Tuesday	6:45AM	6:02PM
Wednesday	6:45AM	6:02PM
Thursday	6:46AM	6:03PM
Friday	6:46AM	6:03PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	05:33AM	04:51PM
Tuesday	06:25AM	05:46PM
Wednesday	07:15AM	06:42PM
Thursday	08:00AM	07:38PM
Friday	08:43AM	08:32PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contribution are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 25, 2007

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	1,2,4,5,6,7
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7

Guam-Manila

CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

Saipan-Manila

CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:30am	11:10am	Daily

Guam-Nagoya

CO 971	7:45am	10:30am	1,2,4,5,6,7
NW 023	4:15pm	7:05pm	Daily
CO 904	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 078	8:30am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily

Guam-Narita

JO 982	4:15am	7:00am	Daily
CO 961	7:20am	9:55am	Daily
CO 006	1:00pm	3:45pm	Daily
JO 942	3:30pm	6:15pm	Daily
NW 081	3:55pm	6:50pm	Daily
NW 073	4:15pm	7:00pm	Daily
CO 963	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:30pm	7:15pm	1,2,3,5,6,7

Guam-Hongkong

CO 910	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5

Saipan-Guanzhou

CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6

Saipan-Rota

CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7

Rota-Guam

CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

ARRIVALS

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,4,5,6,7
CO 9316	3:30am	4:20am	2
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	10:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
OZ 607	6:50pm	2:50am+1	3,7 via Busan
OZ 607	7:30pm	2:50am+1	4 via Busan

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7

Manila-Guam

CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Manila-Saipan

CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily

Nagoya-Guam

NW 024	10:00am	2:40pm	Daily
CO 970	11:30am	4:00pm	Daily
CO 905	8:25pm	12:50am+1	1,3,4,5,6,7

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya

Narita-Guam

JO 941	9:30am	2:05pm	Daily
NW 074	9:45am	2:25pm	Daily
CO 962	11:05am	3:35pm	Daily
CO 007	5:15pm	9:50pm	Daily
NW 082	8:30pm	1:15am+1	Daily
CO 964	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
JO 981	9:30pm	2:05am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:40am	3:20pm	1,2,3,5,6,7

Hongkong-Guam

CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5

Guanzhou-Saipan

CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

(Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana. ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

Unemployment up, stoking recession fears

WASHINGTON (AP)—Wary employers clamped down on hiring and pushed the unemployment rate to a two-year high of 5 percent in December, an ominous sign that the economy may slide into recession. President Bush explored a rescue package, including a tax cut, with his economic advisers.

Gripped by uncertainty, government and private employers last month added the fewest new jobs to their payrolls in more than four years. In fact, employment at private companies alone actually declined. The Labor Department's report, released Friday, provided evidence of an economy greatly strained by a housing slump and a credit crunch.

The disappointing employment figures sent Wall Street into a nosedive, thrust the White House into damage control and ratcheted up the blame game as Republicans and Democrats battle for the presidency. The employment numbers also sparked expectations that the Federal Reserve will have to lower interest rates again. As expected, the Fed took action to make cash more available to banks.

Bush said he is on top of the situation. "We can't take economic growth for granted," he said. "There are signs that will cause us to be ever more diligent and make sure that good policies come out of Washington."

The president said he wants to work with Congress "to deal with the economic realities of the moment and to assure the American people that we will do everything we can to make sure we remain a prosperous country."

With the odds of a recession increasing, Bush is weighing the need for an economic stimulation package. The president, who has been plagued by low public approval ratings for his handling of the economy, isn't expected to make any decisions until later this month. Tax cuts are under consideration, White House spokesman Tony Fratto said. "We've done tax cuts before and it's led to growth," Fratto said.

The State of the Union address is Jan. 28 and Bush is likely to unveil his package then.

The civilian unemployment rate jumped from 4.7 percent in November to 5 percent in December, the highest since November 2005, after the Gulf Coast hurricanes dealt the country a mighty blow. Total payrolls—both private employers and government—grew by just 18,000 last month, the worst showing since August 2003, when the economy suffered job losses as it struggled to recover from the 2001 recession.

White House considering stimulus package

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Bush administration, faced with a deteriorating economy and a big jump in unemployment, said Friday it was considering an economic stimulus package that might include tax cuts to ward off a recession.

Officials stressed that President Bush has not decided yet to offer a proposal but was looking at a variety of options with a plan possibly being unveiled around the time of his Jan. 28 State of the Union address.

"The president is always looking at options ... always talking to people and looking at data," Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Bush met Friday with top economic officials including Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, who are part of the president's working group on financial markets, a group formed after the 1987 stock market crash to monitor markets.

The president was given an assessment of how the economy is behaving and how financial markets are performing after the severe credit squeeze that hit in August. A number of big financial institutions have declared multibillon-dollar losses because of rising defaults in the subprime mortgage market.

White House spokesman Tony Fratto said tax cuts were an option being considered.

Bush in his first term included a tax refund of up to $300 per person to combat the impact of the 2001 recession. Private economists said another round of tax cuts would be the best approach to get money to people who would spend it.

Some suggested a one-year tax rebate of $500 might provide a sufficient shot-in-the-arm for the economy. But they stressed that the proposal would have to be passed quickly.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Semiconductors down on Intel downgrade

NEW YORK (AP)—Chip stocks plunged Friday, as a JP Morgan analyst downgraded market leader Intel Corp. on concerns over slowing orders and high inventory levels. Analyst Christopher Danely downgraded Intel from "Overweight" to "Neutral." He said he was increasingly concerned about a possible correction to inventory levels for personal computer components. He also noted growth limitations in the microprocessor market. Microprocessors are found in all personal computers and control the logic of almost all digital electronics, from clock alarms to video players. Intel shares fell $2, or 8.1 percent, to close at $22.67. They have traded in the last year between $18.75 and $27.99. Intel shares are now down 14 percent on the week. They fell more than 4 percent Wednesday after Banc of America analyst Sumit Dhanda downgraded them to "Neutral" from "Buy," citing concern over market growth in the first half of 2008.

Sallie Mae shares tumble on disclosure

WASHINGTON (AP)—Shares of Sallie Mae tumbled 13 percent on Friday, hitting a 52-week low, as investors reacted to the company's disclosure that it would cut back on its core business of making student loans. Sallie Mae, the nation's largest student lender, has suffered in recent months from higher borrowing costs and the collapse of a $25 billion buyout. It has slashed its earnings forecast for the year and held a special sale of stock to raise $2.9 billion in cash. Sallie Mae, formally known as SLM Corp., said in a regulatory filing Thursday that it planned to "be more selective" in making student loans, both those backed by the federal government and the higher-rate private loans. The Reston, Va.-based company reaped a bonanza in recent years from the boom in student lending, with some 10 million customers, and around $25 billion in private student loans and $128 billion in government-backed loans outstanding.

Fed ups auction amounts to aid banks

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Federal Reserve announced Friday that it is increasing the amount of money available to banks through the new auction process it created to ease the nation's severe credit squeeze. The Fed again pledged to continue the auctions "for as long as necessary." The Fed said that it will increase the amount offered at each of the next two auctions from $20 billion to $30 billion, a 50 percent jump. Those two auctions will be Jan. 14 and Jan. 28. The Fed announcement indicated that the auction process it began last month has been successful in providing a source of loans for cash-strapped banks. The first two auctions offered $20 billion each and attracted bids for about three times that amount.

Investors may see dividends disappear

NEW YORK (AP)—With credit markets continuing their downward spiral, investors could see their dividends disappearing in 2008.

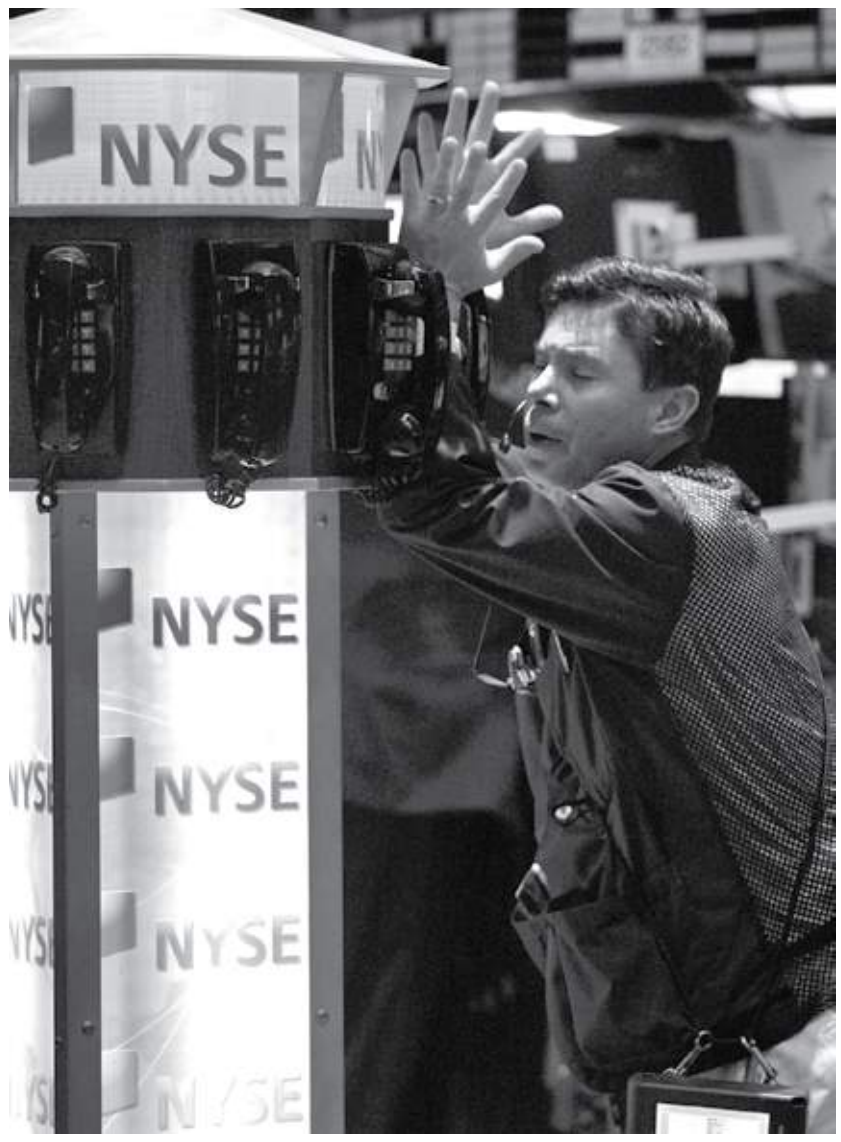
Dividend cuts or suspensions will continue to pick up among financial services firms in 2008, said Howard Silverblatt, a senior index analyst at Standard & Poor's. In 2007, fewer companies increased dividends, according to Standard & Poor's, while more companies in 2007 than in 2006 actually cut or suspended dividends.

Many investors rely on dividend payments as a source of income, and financial institutions in particular have been rich sources of large payouts. Their need to raise capital in the face of rising loan defaults, though, has made their dividends one of the first places they look to save money.

Diane Merdian at Keefe Bruyette & Woods noted that banks, in general, are offering a dividend yield that is near an all-time high when measured against the dividend yield on the S&P 500. Yields are based on a company's full year of dividends compared to the current share price.

Higher yields indicate the company might be distributing more cash to investors than it can afford. Drastic dividends cuts or outright suspensions are likely steps if companies are struggling with earnings or other cash needs.

Since early July, credit markets have been in a free fall, mostly due to rising defaults on mortgages, especially subprime loans given to customers with poor credit history.



AP

A trader leans on a phone post as he talks on his mobile phone on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Thursday Jan. 3, 2008.

Motorola trying to recapture 'Razr' edge

CHICAGO (AP)—New Motorola Inc. CEO Greg Brown doesn't have the secret weapon his predecessor Ed Zander possessed when he arrived at the cell phone maker four years ago—the Razr. But that could be a good thing—if Brown, who took over Tuesday as chief executive, applies lessons learned from Motorola's nasty fall last year.

The then-up-and-coming Razr ultimately proved Zander's undoing. It propelled the Schaumburg, Ill.-based company to lofty sales levels it couldn't sustain without cutting prices aggressively, a decision that had harsh consequences.

The once-soaring company is now thought to have only broken even for 2007. It pulled back from some developing markets and cut 7,500 jobs last year, creating a leaner company that analysts say has halted its free fall in market share and profitability, and laid the groundwork for a promised turnaround.

"People might think Motorola's out of the game entirely," said Neil Strother, a wireless analyst in Seattle for Jupiter Research. "They're not out of the game, they've just had a few bad quarters."

The Razr remains a solid seller, but rivals' newer phones have taken away its buzz. And Brown, 47, who was promoted from chief operating officer and earlier ran San Francisco-based software company Micromuse, doesn't appear to have a killer product to unveil at the Consumer Electronics Show that opens Monday in Las Vegas.

Such a blockbuster announcement from Motorola is likelier at the big wireless shows—in Barcelona in February or Las Vegas in April. But nothing the company is known to have in the pipeline seems likely to match the Razr's popularity.

Nation

Levee breaks as storms pummel West Coast

Some of the area flooded when the Truckee Carson Irrigation Ditch gave way early Saturday, Jan. 6, 2008, in Fernley, Nev. AP

FERNLEY, Nev. (AP)—A ruptured levee sent a frigid "wall of water" from a rain-swollen canal into this high desert town early Saturday, flooding hundreds of homes and forcing the rescue of dozens of people by helicopter and boat.

To the west, a dangerous layer of heavy snow covered the Northern California mountains as rain and wind from the third storm in as many days hit the West Coast. The storms have been blamed for at least three deaths, and hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses in California, Oregon and Washington were without power Saturday.

No injuries were reported in the flood in Fernley, about 30 miles east of Reno, after a section of the Truckee Canal levee up to 150 feet long broke soon after 4 a.m.

As many as 3,500 people were temporarily stranded and an estimated 1,500 ended up being displaced from their homes, Huntley said Saturday night. About 25 people remained at a shelter set up at a high school after a peak of about 150 earlier in the day.

Eric Cornett estimated the water was about 2 feet deep and rising fast when drove away from his home with his wife and three children.

"We saw water coming in the back door and tried to grab as much stuff as possible to save it. The water was rising very quickly and it was scary. The water was freezing. I couldn't even feel my feet," he said.

Lyon County Fire Chief Scott Huntley, one of the first on the scene, described it as a "wall of water about two feet high going down Farm District Road."

"In some places folks had to deal with 8 feet of water," he said. "Firefighters were in chest-deep water making rescues."

Two helicopters aided rescue crews in pontoons in rescuing at least 18 people from driveways and rooftops. Local residents in fishing boats rescued many more.

By afternoon, the Truckee River water flowing into the canal was diverted upstream, said Ernie Schank, president of the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District. As the water receded, Fernley Mayor Todd Cutler said he had reports of damage to at least 300 to 400 homes.

One official suggested burrowing rodents might have contributed to the break in the levee along with the heavy rains, but the cause wasn't clear.

"We have to look at the weather as the culprit right now, but we are not sure of that," Huntley said.

The National Weather Service recorded 1.91 inches of rain at Reno-Tahoe International Airport on Friday, a record. Reno averages only 8 inches of rainfall annually and Fernley only about 5 inches.

Gov. Jim Gibbons, who visited the shelter and toured the area by helicopter on Saturday, declared the county an emergency area. Federal Emergency Management Agency planned to conduct a damage assessment on Monday.

Clinton: Obama has changed positions

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP)—Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Democratic presidential front-runner no longer, accused campaign rival Barack Obama of changing his positions on health care and "a number of issues" Saturday night in a debate three days before the New Hampshire primary.

"I have been entirely consistent in my position," countered Obama, adding that he and Clinton have a philosophical disagreement over her proposal to require Americans to purchase health insurance or face a penalty from the government.

Obama won the kickoff Iowa caucuses last Thursday, and his remaining rivals—Clinton, former Sen. John Edwards and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson—can ill afford for him to gain a victory in New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation primary as well.

"You said you would vote against the Patriot Act. You came to Senate, you voted for it. You said you would vote against the Iraq war, you came to the Senate and voted for" funding, she said.

"I think we should get into examining everybody's record," she said.

Obama's candidacy has soared on his pledge to bring change to Washington, and Clinton sought to blunt his advantage. "I think we're all advocating change," she said.

Edwards, second-place finisher in Iowa, worked throughout the debate to align himself with Obama as an advocate for change in Washington, and described Clinton as a defender of the status quo. "Every time he speaks out for change, every time I fight for change, the forces of status quo are going to attack," Edwards said.

"I didn't hear these kind of attacks from Sen. Clinton when she was ahead," he said. "Now that she's not we hear them."

There were a few moments of humor.

"I've been in hostage negotiations that are a lot more civil than this," Richardson, a one-time diplomat, said at one point.

Asked what she could say to voters who don't find her likable enough, and seem to like Obama more, Clinton drew laughter. "Well, that hurts my feelings. ... But I'll try to go on."

Romney goes after Huckabee, McCain

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP)—Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney clashed with Mike Huckabee on foreign policy and John McCain on immigration Saturday night in a high-stakes presidential campaign debate three days before the New Hampshire primary.

"It's not amnesty," McCain shot back after Romney criticized his plan for overhauling the immigration system. "My friend, you can spend your whole fortune on these attack ads, but it still won't be true."

Earlier, Romney criticized Huckabee for having written that the Bush administration was guilty of an "arrogant bunker mentality" on foreign policy.

"Did you read the article before you commented on it," asked Huckabee, the former Arkansas governor.

"I read the article, the whole article," retorted Romney.

Romney's aggressive demeanor reflected the stakes in the wide-open race for the Republican presidential nomination. Huckabee defeated him in the Iowa caucuses on Thursday with an underfunded campaign. Now Romney faces a strong challenge from a resurgent McCain in New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation primary next Tuesday.

In letters, prisoner hinted at escape

WASHINGTON (AP)—The prisoner serving a life term who escaped from a hospital and led police on a seven-hour pursuit that ended in his death had written letters shortly before the escape saying he didn't plan to die behind bars.

Kelvin Poke overpowered his guards Wednesday while he was being treated at Laurel Regional Hospital in Maryland. He was serving a life prison term plus 40 years for a 2005 carjacking.

In the letter written about two weeks earlier to his daughter and her mother, Poke appeared to have lost hope of ever leaving prison even though he was appealing his sentence, said Rhonda Jackson, mother of his 22-year-old daughter, Dmeon Poke.

Poke, 45, felt he was given a harsh sentence for the carjacking because of his record, which included the robbery of a supermarket, Jackson said.

"He felt like they railroaded him," Jackson told The Associated Press on Saturday. "He said he wasn't dying in jail because he wasn't born in jail."

Poke's escape ended when police cornered him in a cemetery just outside Washington. Officers shot him dead after he allegedly fired on them with a gun he seized from one of the guards at the hospital.

Poke, a prisoner at Jessup Correctional Institution, was taken to Laurel Regional on Monday complaining of chest pains. At the hospital, he was guarded by a two-man team of corrections officials.

While one of the guards was on a break Wednesday morning, Poke overpowered the second guard and seized his gun. Another armed guard tending a different prisoner at the hospital rushed to the room and was also disarmed by Poke.

ACROSS THE NATION

Missing Ga. hiker believed dead

ATLANTA (AP)—Authorities said Saturday they believe a hiker who disappeared from the northern Georgia woods on New Year's Day is dead, and they charged the man who was reportedly last seen with her with kidnapping. Union County Superior Court Judge David Barrett signed a warrant charging Gary Michael Hilton, 61, with kidnapping with bodily injury in the disappearance of Meredith Emerson, said Georgia Bureau of Investigation spokesman John Bankhead. Authorities were serving the warrant on Hilton on Saturday evening. The warrant was issued "based on evidence recovered in various locations," Bankhead said. He did not elaborate. Bankhead said the search for the 24-year-old woman, who was hiking with her dog in the Chattahoochee National Forest, is now focused on finding her body.

Fire damages NY Daily News plant

JERSEY CITY, N.J. (AP)—Firefighters battled a blaze at a Daily News printing facility and warehouse early Saturday. The two-alarm fire was reported at 1:30 a.m. and put under control at 2:12 a.m. by about 65 firefighters, said Armando Roman, Jersey City's director of fire and emergency services. Roman said the fire broke out in an area containing printing presses and part of the building was heavily damaged. "It was a stubborn fire," Roman said, mainly because the oil-based ink used in the presses fueled the flames. A spokeswoman for the Daily News, Jennifer Mauer, issued a statement describing the blaze as a "small mechanical fire." She said the blaze disrupted part of the newspaper's Saturday production but said the Sunday print run was expected to be normal. The cause of the fire was under investigation.

Attendance up at zoo after tiger attack

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Attendance was up at the San Francisco Zoo following a tiger attack that killed a young man on Christmas Day, a zoo spokesman said Saturday. Twice as many visitors came to the zoo when the facility reopened Thursday as had visited the same day last year, spokesman Paul Garcia said. Most of the 782 visitors arrived before heavy rains began falling over the city Thursday afternoon. Just under 400 visitors who came to the zoo the entire day on Jan. 3, 2007, Garcia said. Severe storms over Northern California forced the zoo to close again Friday, as high wind brought down tree branches and knocked out power at the facility. No animals were hurt in the storm.

Suicide of taunted guard jolts friends

NEWARK, N.J. (AP)—Maybe it was enough simply that two inmates escaped from Rudolph Zurick's jail. Or maybe their taunting, smiley-faced note calling him "a real pal" and thanking him "for the tools needed"—and the media attention it brought—was more than the shoe-shining perfectionist of a guard could take, even if no one believed for a second that he'd helped the criminals break out. Perhaps the mere possibility that he could be suspended or fired from the job he'd performed spotlessly for 14 years was what pushed him to the point that even the counseling he sought immediately after the escape couldn't save him. His friends and family might never know for sure. On Wednesday, the day he was to be interviewed by investigators probing the Dec. 16 breakout, Zurick shot himself in the head at the home he shared with his wife and 4-year-old daughter.

Asia

Bhutto's husband calls for UN probe

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Benazir Bhutto's widowed husband accused members of Pakistan's ruling regime of involvement in his wife's killing and called Saturday for a U.N. investigation, as British officers aiding Pakistan's own probe pored over the crime scene.

"An investigation conducted by the government of Pakistan will have no credibility, in my country or anywhere else," Asif Ali Zardari, the effective leader of Bhutto's opposition party, said in a commentary published in The Washington Post. "One does not put the fox in charge of the hen house."

Calls for an independent, international investigation have intensified since the former prime minister was killed Dec. 27 in a shooting and bombing attack after a campaign rally. Opposition activists denounced the government's initial assessment that an Islamic militant was behind the attack and that Bhutto died, not from gunshot wounds, but from the force of the blast.

President Pervez Musharraf acknowledged that investigators may have drawn conclusions too quickly and mishandled evidence, including hosing down the site hours after the attack. But he insisted the government was competent to run the investigation with the help of forensic experts from Britain's Scotland Yard. The United States said it did not believe a U.N. investigation was needed.

In an interview to be aired on CBS' "60 Minutes" program Sunday, Musharraf acknowledged that Bhutto may have been shot, CBS reported on its Web site. "Yes, absolutely, yes. Possibility," Musharraf was quoted as saying.

The British investigators arrived at the site of the attack in the city of Rawalpindi under heavy police guard in a convoy of sports utility vehicles. They spoke to local security officials and repeatedly walked from the park where Bhutto held her final campaign rally to the spot outside where her departing vehicle was attacked.

Local police parked a truck where Bhutto's had been, and the British investigators took photographs of it and filmed it from different angles, including from a nearby rooftop.

Zardari said no government investigation would satisfy him. He reiterated his demand for a U.N. probe modeled on the investigation into the death of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and urged "friends of democracy in the West, in particular the United States and Britain, to endorse the call for such and independent investigation."

AP

Asif Ali Zardari, husband of Pakistan's slain opposition leader Benazir Bhutto prays for his wife at his residence in Naudero, Pakistan on Friday, Jan. 4, 2008.

Ex-Indonesia dictator's health improves

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesia's former dictator Suharto was responding well to dialysis treatment Sunday but remains in critical condition, his doctor said.

Suharto, 86, was admitted Friday to Pertamina Hospital with swollen intestines, a dangerously low heart rate and anemia.

After being put on a dialysis machine Saturday evening he quickly showed signs of improvement, said chief presidential physician Brig. Gen. Mardjo Subiandono.

Much of the excess fluid in his organs had been drained, his blood pressure returned to normal levels and "he smiled again," Subiandono said, adding "he is still in critical condition because his blood pressure could drop at any time."

Suharto was also receiving a blood transfusion and needs a second pacemaker, doctors said.

Suharto, accused of overseeing a brutal purge of more than half a million left-wing opponents at the outset of his 32-year reign, was conscious but drowsy from medication, several Cabinet members said after visiting him.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono urged Indonesians to pray for Suharto's recovery.

"We should pray for the best and hope all efforts to restore his health will be successful," Yudhoyono said in a statement issued Saturday at his palace in the capital. "The country always gives the best health treatment to former leaders."

A dialysis machine and other equipment was rushed to Suharto's bedside and 40 specialists assembled to diagnose and treat the former strongman, who was toppled by a pro-democracy uprising during the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Missing South Korean sailor found dead

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—One of the 14 sailors missing from a cargo ship that sank off South Korea's south coast last week was found dead Saturday, the Coast Guard said. Local fisherman found the body in their net at a site 12 miles from where the cargo ship sank Dec. 25, the Coast Guard said in a statement. Family members later identified the body as that of Ye Heung-rak, 54, the Coast Guard said. Ye was one of 15 sailors aboard the ship, which sank in bad weather off the coast of Yeosu, 280 miles south of Seoul, while carrying 2,000 tons of nitric acid. One crew member was rescued hours after the accident, but 13 others were still missing. On Friday, divers found the ship on the sea floor in about 220 feet of water, Coast Guard officer Kang Byung-moon said.

China says toy exports rose 20 percent in first 10 months of 2007 despite recalls

BEIJING (AP)—China's toy exports grew in the first 10 months of 2007, state media said Sunday, despite global recalls of millions of Chinese-made toys over lead paint concerns and design flaws. The exports worth US$7.07 billion (€4.7 billion) between January and October were a 20.1 percent increase from the same period in 2006, the official Xinhua News Agency said. "The 10-month period saw China's toy exports to European and North American markets recover and that to emerging markets grow rapidly," Xinhua said. The Xinhua report did not give the number of toys exported during the 10 months. The government has said that China, the world's largest toy manufacturer, exported 22 billion toys in 2006, about 60 percent of the world's total. The quality of Beijing's exports came under international scrutiny last March after dog and cat deaths in North America were linked to a pet food ingredient made in China. Concerns grew after potentially dangerous toxins and chemicals were found in products ranging from toothpaste to fish.

Malaysian riot police break up rally protesting detention without trial

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Banging batons against their shields, Malaysian police chased away hundreds of demonstrators who held a candlelight vigil to protest a decades-old law allowing indefinite detention without trial. A water cannon fired a single burst to drive away the last stragglers among the crowd in downtown Kuala Lumpur, ending a 90-minute standoff Saturday. Police had banned the rally against the Internal Security Act. It was the latest in a series of protests that have rocked the government in recent months.

Malaysia makes sex tape scandal arrests

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysian police have arrested a beauty parlor owner and a farmer suspected of distributing a sex video showing a former minister committing adultery, news reports said Saturday. Police seized a laptop, a DVD and three VCDs showing former Health Minister Chua Soi Lek engaging in sex acts after detaining a 29-year-old woman at her beauty parlor in southern Johor state, the New Straits Times said. "We are investigating how the woman obtained the recordings and who is behind it," state police chief Hussin Ismail was quoted as saying. Police are still investigating who made the sex video and how hidden cameras were installed in Chua's suite in a luxury hotel in Johor, he said.

Thai military says security improving

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Thailand's military insisted Saturday that security was improving in the country's restive south and that peace would come to the region in 2008, despite New Year's Eve bombings that injured dozens.

Authorities have detained more than 800 insurgents over the past 12 months in a stepped-up offensive against rebels in the Muslim-dominated south, army spokesman Akara Thiprote said.

The violence has claimed nearly 2,700 people in the southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, and some parts of neighboring Songkhla, since a long-simmering Islamic separatist insurgency flared up in January 2004.

"The security force is confident that we can bring the situation under control now," Akara told The Associated Press. "Since we have a clearer picture of the hardcore insurgents and can limit their movements, the situation will gradually improve and we will bring peace to the region in 2008."

The upbeat assessment comes less than a week after insurgents launched a brazen New Year's Eve attack on the Thai-Malaysian border town of Sungai Kolok. Five bombs exploded in the town's hotel and night life district, wounding 27 people, many of them New Year's revelers.

It also follows a report last month by the global security think tank International Crisis Group, which found the government's reliance on thousands of poorly trained paramilitary forces was undermining the army's fight against the insurgents. These forces have also been accused of human rights abuses, the group said.

Unemployed to sterilize monkeys in India

NEW DELHI (AP)—A northern Indian state said Thursday it planned to use unemployed youths to sterilize monkeys to try to combat aggressive primates who have been raiding farms. The idea drew immediate condemnation from conservationists, who said the plan was unscientific and would likely worsen the problem.

Indian authorities have struggled in recent years to deal with the tens of thousands of monkeys that live in and around cities. They are drawn to public places such as temples and office buildings, where devout Hindus feed them, believing them to be manifestations of the god Hanuman.

In recent months, the deputy mayor of New Delhi was killed when he fell from his balcony during an attack by wild monkeys, and 25 others were injured when a monkey went on a rampage in the city.

The mountainous state of Himachal Pradesh is infested with rhesus macaque monkeys, who have been driven to farms and cities after losing their natural forest habitat.

Prem Kumar Dhumal, the state's chief minister, said Himachal Pradesh would go on a "war footing" to fight the thousands of monkeys who have been turning farms into wastelands and attacking people, according to a statement from his office.

"Affected districts would be identified and local youth involved in the process, who would be provided training in capturing and sterilization by the experts," the statement quoted Dhumal as saying, adding that they would use "laser sterilization."

The capacity of zoos in the area would be expanded to accommodate captured monkeys, and camps may be set up for them in order to protect crops and other farmland from being encroached upon, the statement said.

World

Kenyan president offers unity government

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—President Mwai Kibaki told the top U.S. diplomat for Africa that he was willing to share power and the opposition backed off demands for his resignation on Saturday, offering hope for an end to Kenya's deadly electoral crisis.

As Kibaki and Raila Odinga faced growing pressure to compromise, the violence that has killed more than 300 people across the country appeared to ease in the capital for the first time since the disputed vote that gave the president a second term and awakened dormant ethnic rivalries.

Kibaki

The crisis following the Dec. 27 election with a deeply flawed vote count has pitted Kibaki's Kikuyu people against Kenya's other tribes, and brought chaos to a country that had been one of east Africa's most stable democracies.

In the countryside, with the continued threat of ethnic attacks, thousands fled their homes, escorted by soldiers as they streamed down roads strewn with corpses, burned out vehicles and downed power lines.

Desperate Kenyans urged Kibaki and Odinga to compromise.

"Sit down, find a way out," said Christopher Kingua, as he fled his home near Eldoret in the western highlands, where bodies were spilling out of packed morgues. "Our homes, our people, our property has been destroyed."

After meeting with Jendayi Frazer, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Kibaki said he was "ready to form a government of national unity that would not only unite Kenyans but would also help in the healing and reconciliation process," according to the director of the presidential news service, Isaiya Kabira.

Odinga, whose early lead over Kibaki evaporated as the tallies rolled in last week, met separately with Frazer and later said he had not received any formal offer and demanded an international mediator help settle the dispute.

"Let them put that on the table when we are negotiating," Odinga said of Kibaki's proposal.

He also repeated his demand for a new election.

But after a second meeting with Frazer, Odinga unexpectedly withdrew his call for Kibaki to step down.

"If Mr. Kibaki accepts an international mediator we will not demand that he either resign or acknowledge he did not win the election," Odinga's spokesman, Salim Lone, told The Associated Press.

There was no immediate statement from Frazer on her 90-minute talk with Kibaki or her two meetings with Odinga.

It would be nearly impossible for Kibaki to govern without opposition support. In parliamentary balloting, Odinga's party won 95 of 210 legislative seats and half of Kibaki's Cabinet lost their seats.

AP

Relatives take a body away for burial at a mortuary so full of bodies they still lay piled across floors at the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret, Kenya Saturday, Jan. 5, 2008.

Terrified Kenyans flee ethnic violence

CHEPTIRET, Kenya (AP)—Thousands of refugees fled western Kenya Saturday on buses escorted by armed soldiers, streaming down roads strewn with downed power lines, burnt out vehicles and the corpses of others killed when they tried to escape an explosion of postelection ethnic violence.

Behind them, thousands more huddled at church compounds and a police station in the city of Eldoret as wailing relatives tried to identify hacked, burned and strangled family members in a mortuary so full of bodies they lay piled wall-to-wall across bloody floors.

At Cheptiret, 12 miles south of Eldoret, bus after packed bus mostly full of people from President Mwai Kibaki's Kikuyu tribe drove slowly past soldiers loyal to the president who stood guard at a roadblock controlled hours earlier by a machete-wielding mob.

Wide-eyed passengers pointed out the windows, hands covering their mouths, as they gawked at two bodies laying in the dirt along the roadside beside the charred hulk of a white minibus.

The two slain men had been pelted with stones by Kalenjin mobs several days earlier and then set ablaze, said one man in Cheptiret, Bernard Kimutai, an ethnic Kalenjin who said he was a human rights worker.

"They failed to identify themselves properly, and then tried to run," he said, alluding to his belief they were Kikuyu.

The struggle between Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga over who won a bitterly contested Dec. 27 presidential vote has ignited some of the worst ethnic unrest in Kenya's history, destroying its image as a stable democracy and a top tourist destination boasting some of the best wildlife viewing on earth. Unrest has left hundreds dead and displaced at least 250,000 people across Kenya.

Iraqi soldier accused of killing US GIs

BAGHDAD (AP)—An Iraqi soldier is accused of turning on two decorated American servicemen and shooting them to death during a joint operation in northern Iraq, the U.S. military said Saturday. An Iraqi official said the suspect may have links to militant groups.

The shooting the day after Christmas in the northern city of Mosul, which left three other U.S. soldiers and a civilian interpreter wounded, was the second known attack by a member of the Iraqi military on the American troops who train and work closely with Iraqi forces.

Initial results from an Iraqi investigation indicate that the soldier who opened fire may have links to local militants, said Brig. Mutaa Habib Jassim al-Khazrachi, commander of the Iraqi army's 2nd Division, who did not elaborate.

Brig. Nour al-Din Hussein, commander of the Iraqi army's 4th Brigade, 2nd Division in Mosul said the Iraqi soldier was a Sunni from the al-Qayara area south of Mosul city.

Parts of Mosul are considered strongholds of the Sunni extremist group al-Qaida in Iraq.

The suspect and another Iraqi soldier were in custody, the U.S. military said.

The military identified the slain Americans as Capt. Rowdy J. Inman, 38, of Panorama Village, Texas and Sgt. Benjamin B. Portell, 27, of Bakersfield, Calif. Both were assigned to the 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and were based at Fort Hood, Texas. Inman had been awarded the Bronze Star Medal and Portell the Army Commendation Medal.

"For reasons that are yet unknown, at least one Iraqi Army soldier allegedly opened fire killing" the two, the U.S. military said.

The soldier fled "but was identified by other Iraqi army personnel" and was apprehended, it said.

The U.S. military said its investigators and the Iraqi army were looking into the shooting.

Ice pioneer eyes farthest glaciers

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (AP)—For 5,000 years, great tongues of ice have spread over the 3-mile-high slopes of Puncak Jaya, in the remotest reaches of this remote tropical island. Now those glaciers are melting, and Lonnie Thompson must get there before they're gone.

To the American glaciologist, the ancient ice is a vanishing "archive" of the story of El Nino, the equatorial phenomenon driving much of the world's climate.

More than that, the little-explored glaciers are a last unknown for a mountaineering scientist who for three decades has circled the planet pioneering the deep-drilling of ice cores, both to chronicle the history of climate and to bear witness to the death of tropical glaciers from global warming.

"No one knows how thick these remaining glaciers are," Thompson said of Puncak Jaya, or Mount Jaya. "We do know they are disappearing."

The unknowns on this wild, Texas-sized island extend even to the local climate.

"There are indications of warming," explained Kasis Inape, a senior government climatologist here. "But we can't really confidently say the temperature change has been this much or that much, because the actual data are lacking."

As a companion project to Thompson's expedition, an international research team including Inape plans a first-ever assessment of recent climate change on New Guinea, especially along the 1,200-mile mountainous spine of the southwestern Pacific island.

Thompson's quest on Puncak Jaya will be for something deeper in the past.

"We may actually see an El Nino history there," he said by telephone from his office-laboratory at Ohio State University. And that history may foretell the future, he and others believe.

Knowing how past temperature changes affected El Nino, the atmospheric-oceanic disturbance that roils the tropics every few years, may help scientists predict how much worse and more frequent El Nino's droughts, tempests and floods may grow as the world warms in decades to come.

WORLD BRIEFS

Al-Qaida videos now on cell phones

CAIRO, Egypt (AP)—Al-Qaida video messages of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahri can now be downloaded to cell phones, the terror network announced as part of its attempts to extend its influence. The announcement was posted late Friday by al-Qaida's media wing, al-Sahab, on Web sites commonly used by Islamic militants. As of Saturday, eight previously recorded videos were made available including a recent tribute to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the former al-Qaida in Iraq leader killed by U.S. forces in Iraq in June 2006. Ben Venzke, the head of IntelCenter, a U.S. group that monitors and analyzes militant messages, said it was not the first time al-Sahab has released videos designed for cell phones. He said the group has been releasing them for years, but that between September and December, a few video messages did not come with versions for cell phones.

Israel winds up raid in Nablus

NABLUS, West Bank (AP)—Israeli troops wound up a four-day sweep of wanted men and munitions caches in the West Bank town of Nablus on Saturday, and residents confined at home since the operation began ventured outside to survey damage and resume their lives. But violence continued in the Gaza Strip, where the Israeli military regularly battles Palestinian militants firing rockets at Israeli towns. On Saturday, Gaza militants fired 26 mortar shells and seven rockets into Israel, the military said. The Popular Resistance Committees, a group allied with Hamas, claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. One Hamas police officer was killed late Saturday in an Israeli strike in a part of northern Gaza often used by rocket squads, and three other Palestinians were critically wounded, according to Dr. Moaiya Hassanain of the Gaza health ministry. The Israeli military said its ground troops targeted and hit two armed men in Gaza but gave no additional details.

Exit poll: Georgia president to win vote

TBILISI, Georgia (AP)—President Mikhail Saakashvili headed for victory in Saturday's election, according to an exit poll in this former Soviet republic where he is fighting accusations of authoritarian tendencies four years after coming to power as a champion of democracy. Saakashvili's supporters waved flags and tooted car horns in the capital after the exit poll showed him winning 53.8 percent of the vote. But the poll had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points—casting doubt on whether the president would hang onto the absolute majority needed to avoid a runoff. The opposition called for protests Sunday, claiming the vote was rigged and the exit poll falsified. Saakashvili's leading challenger, Levan Gachechiladze, received 28.3 percent of the vote, according to the exit poll. Saakashvili called for reconciliation in a speech to supporters at celebratory concert.

Health & Fitness

Forgiveness for the body and mind

By MELISSA HEALY
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Close your eyes and think of someone who has hurt you. The offense might be profound or small but deeply painful, a single arrow to your heart or a thousand wounding slights. The perpetrator might be a stranger—the guy who caused your accident, the gang-banger who took your child. More likely, it will be someone close and trusted. The sister who killed herself. The parent who lashed out, the spouse mired in addiction, an unfaithful lover.

It might even be yourself.

Let all the anger, hurt and resentment you feel for that wrongdoer bubble to the surface. Seethe, shout, savor it. Feel your heart pounding, your stomach churning and your thoughts racing in dark directions.

OK, stop. Now, forgive your offender. Don't just shed the bitterness and drop the recrimination, but empathize with his plight, wish him well and move on—whether he's sorry or not.

University of Wisconsin psychologist Robert D. Enright, the guru of what many are calling a new science of forgiveness, calls this final step "making a gesture of goodness" to a wrongdoer. It's the culmination of a process that, he insists, "you've got to be able to see through to the end."

But why, exactly, would you do that? For the good of your soul? To hold the family or business together, to make the world a better place?

A growing corps of researchers thinks they have it. Forgiveness—a virtue embraced by almost every religious tradition as a balm for the soul—might be medicine for the body, they suggest. In less than a decade, those preaching and studying forgiveness have amassed an impressive slate of findings on its possible health benefits.

They have shown that "forgiveness interventions"—often just a couple of short sessions in which the wounded are guided toward positive feelings for an offender—can improve cardiovascular function, diminish chronic pain, relieve depression and boost quality of life among the very ill.

An AIDS patient who has forgiven the person presumed to have transmitted the virus is more likely to care for him or herself and less likely to engage in unprotected sex. Those more inclined to pardon the transgressions of others have been found to have lower blood pressure, fewer depressive symptoms and, once they hit late middle age, better overall mental and physical health than those who do not forgive easily.

Like proper nutrition and exercise, researchers say, forgiveness appears to be a behavior that a patient can learn, exercise and repeat as needed to prevent disease and preserve health.

"Who would have thunk it—that something locked away in religious culture could be turned into a secular training program," says psychologist Fred Luskin, director of Stanford University's Forgiveness Projects and a leading researcher in the field who teaches groups—many of them bound together in the workplace—to forgive offenses large and small. "It's a skill that can be taught."

Psychologist Loren Toussaint of Luther University in Decorah, Iowa, and colleagues were the first to establish a long-term link between people's health and their propensity to forgive.

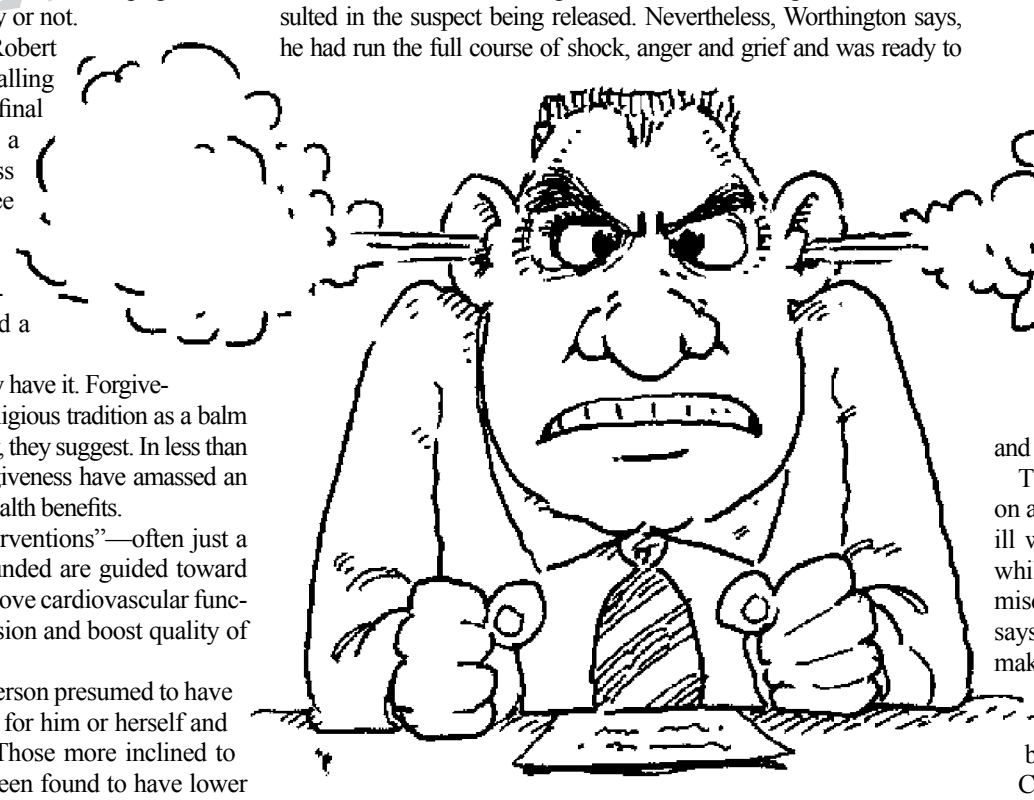
Their national survey, published in the Journal of Adult Development in 2001, found forgiveness rare enough: Only 52 percent of Americans said they had forgiven others for hurtful acts. But willingness of young respondents to forgive showed no link to health; that propensity began to make a difference as respondents approached middle age. The survey found that those 45 and older who forgave others were more likely to report having better overall mental and physical health than those who did not.

Everett Worthington, a professor of psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University and a leading researcher on the links between forgiveness and health, has put many study subjects through the paces of pardoning and measured the resulting physiological effect.

Worthington is a believer, both in the goodness of forgiveness and its power to influence health and wellness. The first part of that conviction springs from his Christian upbringing, he says. But he insists the latter has been forged by studies that rigorously test whether forgiveness—including the replacement of hostility and negative feelings with "compassion, empathy or love" for the offender—can blunt or reverse the physiological stress of chronic anger.

"We are limited in what we can conclude," Worthington acknowledges. As a means of diffusing stress and its negative health effects, finding a way out of anger and resentment clearly yields benefits, he says. But it's not so clear that developing good feelings for your transgressor—the standard many of those conducting forgiveness research embrace—will enhance health. "It's a lot easier to document the reduction in bad effects than to document the increase in good effects," he says.

Worthington's own ability to forgive was put to the test in 1996, when his elderly mother was killed in her apartment by a crowbar-wielding intruder. Although a suspect was arrested and police said he initially confessed to the crime, irregularities in the handling of evidence resulted in the suspect being released. Nevertheless, Worthington says, he had run the full course of shock, anger and grief and was ready to forgive in less than a month after his mother's death.



"I look back and I think, for me, what a mercy from God that I could spend eight years examining forgiveness before I had to deal with it. I had already thought through so many of these issues before I had to apply them."

Efforts to put forgiveness to a rigorous scientific test have been funded largely by two philanthropies long associated with research on faith, religion and science: the Michigan-based Fetzer Foundation and the John Templeton Foundation of Pennsylvania, which effectively created the field in 1997 with a pledge of $2 million for research on forgiveness. The leading thinkers on the subject are clinical and academic psychologists whose devotion to the goal of forgiveness either springs from religious teachings or verges on the religious.

To many in mental health who fear that traumatized patients face pressure to forgive when doing so is premature or ill-advised, the new science of forgiveness is worrisome. "The whole Christian, 12-step mentality has permeated our culture, and the emphasis on forgiveness is part of that," says Jeanne Safer, a New York psychoanalyst and author of "Must We Forgive?" "For many patients, forgiveness is a double-whammy: First someone screws you, and then it's your fault you don't want to embrace them in heaven. I'm not against forgiveness; I'm against compulsory forgiveness with no choice. And I'm against `forgiveness lite,' which keeps you from feeling the intensity of the experience, from deeply grappling with what's been done to you."

Among victims of incest—many of whom have turned blame inward or fear that forgiveness entails reconciliation with an abuser—pressure to forgive can be stressful and sometimes impossible, says Linda Davis, the executive director of Survivors of Incest Anonymous. "I always tell ministers, `Don't use the F-word.' "

"You have to get to a place of acceptance," Davis says. "Forgiveness is a bonus. You don't have to get there."

Scientific scrutiny has a way of upending pious notions, and the science of forgiveness is no exception. While much of the field's early work has focused on forgiveness of others, academic psychologists and clinicians are turning up evidence that forgiving oneself might have a more powerful effect on overall health and well-being.

Eruptions of anger at others have been shown, clearly, to increase the risk of heart arrhythmias, heart attacks and high blood pressure, says Dr. Douglas Russell, a Veterans Administration cardiologist who, in a 2003 study, found that the coronary function of patients who had suffered a heart attack improved after a 10-hour course in forgiveness. But when anger is turned inward and directed at oneself, lack of forgiveness appears likely to have an ongoing, toxic health effect that might be even more corrosive to physical and mental health than anger directed outward.

"Sometimes people hurt us, and we move on, and it might fade," says Toussaint, the psychologist. As he has refined that work with better definitions of forgiveness, however, Toussaint says he has been surprised to learn that those who hold onto self-blame might suffer more. "Forgiveness of self holds the more powerful punch," Toussaint says. "The effects are dramatic."

In work not yet published, Toussaint found that men who do not forgive themselves readily are seven times more likely to meet the full diagnostic criteria for clinical depression than men who do. Highly self-forgiving women are three times less likely to have the symptoms of clinical depression—a risk factor for a host of ills—than their sisters who are prone to regret and self-blame. Those more forgiving of themselves also sleep more and are in better overall health, he has found.

It's an effect that Toussaint has seen extensively—with related health effects—in combat veterans who come home unable to forgive themselves for what they did, or did not do, in battle. Other researchers have studied self-blame and forgiveness in cancer patients, those living with HIV/AIDS and victims of incest and abuse, many of whom blame themselves for their plight.

"The human mind is sometimes an instrument of misery. When you've done wrong to others and regret it, it bubbles up again and again," Toussaint says. "There's no escaping the perpetrator."

The early pioneers of the forgiveness field have focused largely on an unselfish, altruistic version of forgiveness—one that replaces ill will toward hurtful others with positive feelings. By contrast, while the health benefits of forgiving oneself for past mistakes or misdeeds may be considerable, there is arguably little altruism in it, says Safer, the New York psychoanalyst. Does that, she wonders, make it a less appealing object of research or a less worthy goal for clinicians to foster?

And then there is the complex relationship, for many people, between forgiveness of others and self-blame.

Clinicians skeptical of forgiveness as a necessary endpoint of therapy say they are quick to recognize them: Many of those who are quickest to forgive others, often at the urging of a relative or clergy member, do so because they blame themselves for the bad things that have happened to them. Others forgive too quickly because they are unwilling to acknowledge their general feelings of shame and anger or simply because they feel unworthy of better treatment.

Safer calls this "fake forgiveness." It allows victims to continue blaming themselves, she says. And it's a dangerous side effect of what Safer sees as a bid to sell forgiveness as a panacea.

Jeffrey R., a Maryland man whose father sexually molested him and three siblings as children, acknowledges that self-blame and denial after the abuse has exacted a terrible cost on his family. Two older brothers—both of whom have refused to discuss their father's actions—have had seven heart attacks between them before the age of 60. One is a drug addict for whom a longtime stomach ailment now threatens to become deadly. Another lives alone, "eats unhealthy, lives unhealthy," says Jeffrey, a member of Survivors After Incest who spoke on condition that his full name not be revealed.

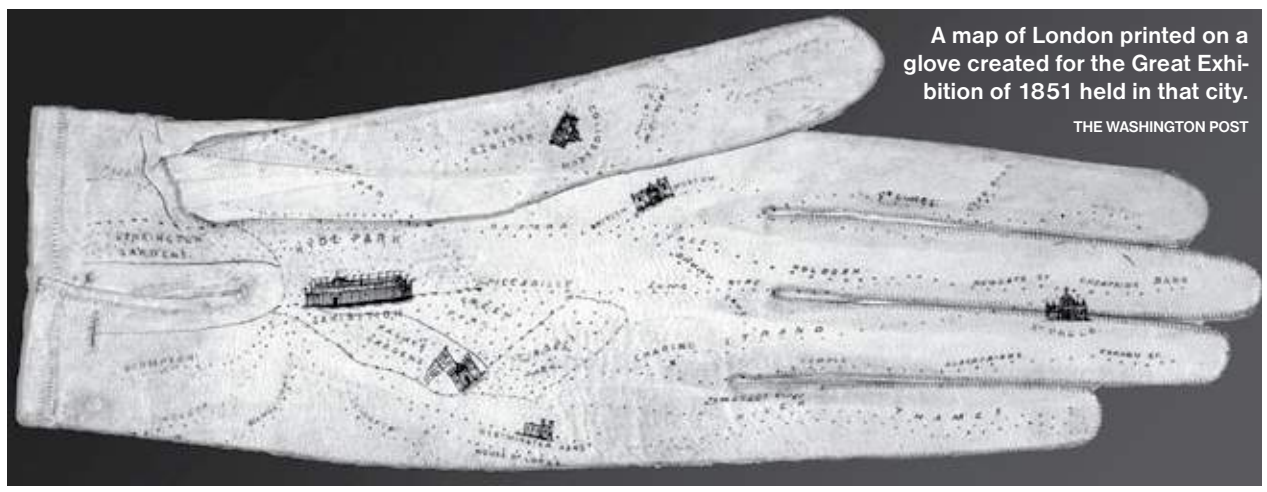
"When you have this background, you become very skilled at pretending things are OK, just ignoring it," Jeffrey says. Meanwhile, the guilt, shame and anger, he says, "are just consuming."

After nine suicide attempts and decades of contending with temper and suspicion toward others, Jeffrey says he's not ready to forgive the father who did it, the mother who looked the other way or the aunts and uncles who, after the abuse came to light, refused to discuss it. His sister, who was raped by her father at 5, has embraced forgiveness, says Jeffrey, telling her brother God will judge their father. Jeffrey insists he's let go of the anger and bitterness caused by his abuse, and it "has saved my life."

But forgiveness on the same level as his sister's? "I'm not really there yet," he says.

Life & Style

Picturing the world



A map of London printed on a glove created for the Great Exhibition of 1851 held in that city.
THE WASHINGTON POST

By KARL LYDERSEN
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To Inuits in the late 1800s, a map was a piece of wood with carved lines and nocks representing the coastlines and islets of Greenland.

To ancient Greeks and early Europeans, maps were flights of fancy and horror, showing beautiful beasts and savage humans of uncharted lands.

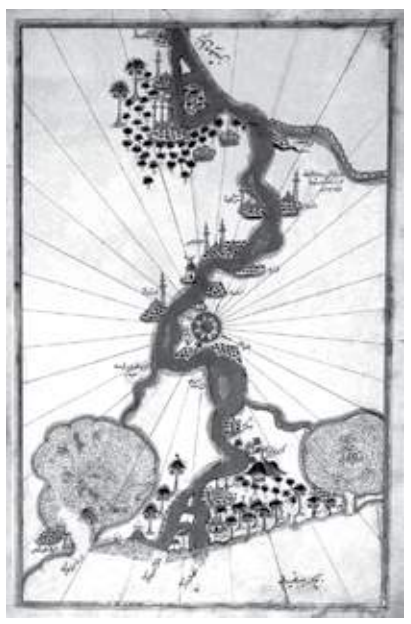
Eighteenth-century Buddhists saw maps as moral charts juxtaposing landscapes of men's sensual desires and "infinite space." New World colonizers used maps as tools of conquest and empire, distorting size and shape to serve their self-interest.

No matter the age, maps have always inspired that eternal human penchant for dreaming of far-off places, for locating oneself in the universe. As vessels of wishful thinking, they transform us into explorers lured by the mystery of the unknown, if not a lust to conquer it.

Pursuits and desires such as these are at the core of the Festival of Maps here, billed as the largest, most diverse cartographic exposition in U.S. history. "Maps: Finding Our Place in the World," which is one part of the Chicago festival, will open in March at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. Although computer and satellite technology seem to cast a cold, hard light on our physical realm, people still turn to maps to feed their imagination, festival organizers say—whether through collecting and studying ancient maps, using modern mapping technology in creative and interactive ways or making cartographically inspired art. Rather than distance us from cartography, technology has made mapping part of our everyday lives—in driving, in fashion, even in political protest.

"It turns out almost any man on the street you talk to says they love maps," says Anna Siegler, who was hired to coordinate the festival by her friend Barry MacLean, one of the world's top collectors, with more than 20,000 maps.

The love of maps is "this quietly held passion (that) people have," says Siegler, wearing an Hermes scarf emblazoned with a map of the world's rivers.



THE WASHINGTON POST
A 17th-century Ottoman map showing the Nile River snaking through Egypt.

"The advent of digital mapping—Google, MapQuest—means more people use maps more often, and that's stimulating interest in cartography," says Diane Dillon, a co-curator of the Newberry Library's "Mapping Manifest Destiny" exhibit. "Disciplines like geography have fallen by the wayside, but digital mapping is bringing it in through the back door. It makes geography fun."

Launched in November and continuing through mid-2008, the privately run festival involves exhibitions in more than 30 Chicago institutions, from independent art galleries to major institutions such as the Field Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art.

More than 800 maps and related objects are being showcased, from a 1300 B.C. clay tablet mapping the Babylonian city of Nippur (in present-day Iraq) to the Sloan Digital Sky Survey's ongoing mapping of the galaxies. Cartographic paraphernalia include a pocket globe and a pocket astrolabe, a gadget once brandished by wealthy Englishmen seeking the time of day through a map of the stars. Such was its cachet that Marvin Bolt, an Adler Planetarium astronomy historian, calls it "the 16th-century iPhone."

The idea for the festival was born six years ago during a social gathering that included MacLean, John W. McCarter Jr., president of the Field Museum, and others with an interest in map collecting, history and world travel.

"John said, `Why don't we have a display at the Field Museum of the 100 greatest maps of all time?' and we started talking about what those would be," says MacLean, president of MacLean-Fogg, a global machine parts manufacturer.

His corporate offices in the northwest Chicago suburb of Mundelein are lined with maps from across the world, with a focus on the early American interior. He lent many of his maps to the festival.

MacLean has been passionate about maps all his life. As a child he would pick up kitschy free maps at service stations during family road trips in Wisconsin.

THE WASHINGTON POST
"Leo Belgicus," a map of European Low Countries in the shape of a lion.

Tourists shun crime-hit Mexico beaches

PLAYAS DE ROSARITO, Mexico (AP)—Assaults on American tourists have brought hard times to hotels and restaurants that dot Mexican beaches just south of the border from San Diego.

Surfers and kayakers are frightened to hit the waters of the northern stretch of Mexico's Baja California peninsula, long popular as a weekend destination for U.S. tourists. Weddings have been canceled. Lobster joints a few steps from the Pacific were almost empty on the usually busy New Year's weekend.

Americans have long tolerated shakedowns by police who boost salaries by pulling over motorists for alleged traffic violations, and tourists know parts of Baja are a hotbed of drug-related violence. But a handful of attacks since summer by masked, armed bandits - some of whom used flashing lights to appear like police - marks a new extreme that has spooked even longtime visitors.

Lori Hoffman, a San Diego-area emergency room nurse, said she was sexually assaulted Oct. 23 by two masked men in front of her boyfriend, San Diego Surfing Academy owner Pat Weber, who was forced to kneel at gunpoint for 45 minutes. They were at a campground with about 30 tents, some 200 miles south of the border.

The men shot out windows of the couple's trailer and forced their way inside, ransacked the cupboards and left with about $7,000 worth of gear, including computers, video equipment and a guitar.

Weber, who has taught dozens of students in Mexico over the last 10 years, plans to surf in Costa Rica or New Zealand. "No more Mexico," said Hoffman, who reported the attack to Mexican police. No arrests have been made.

The Baja California peninsula is known worldwide for clean and sparsely populated beaches, lobster and margaritas and blue waters visited by whales and dolphins. Surfers love the waves; fishermen catch tuna, yellowtail and marlin. Food and hotels are cheap.

News of harrowing assaults on American tourists has begun to overshadow that appeal in the northern part of the peninsula, home to drug gangs and the seedy border city of Tijuana. The comparatively isolated southern tip, with its tony Los Cabos resort, remains safer and is still popular with Hollywood celebrities, anglers and other foreign tourists.

Local media and surfing Web sites that trumpeted Baja in the past have reported several frightening crimes that U.S. and Mexican officials consider credible. Longtime visitors are particularly wary of a toll road near the border that runs through Playas de Rosarito—Rosarito Beach.

In late November, as they returned from the Baja 1000 off-road race, a San Diego-area family was pulled over on the toll road by a car with flashing lights. Heavily armed men held the family hostage for two hours. They eventually released them but stole the family's truck.

Before dawn on Aug. 31, three surfers were carjacked on the same stretch of highway. Gunmen pulled them over in a car with flashing lights, forced them out of their vehicles and ordered one to kneel. They took the trucks and left the surfers.

Aqua Adventures of San Diego scrapped its annual three-day kayak trip to scout for whales in January, ending a run of about 10 years. Customers had already been complaining about longer waits to return to the U.S.; crime gave them another reason to stay away.

"People are just saying, 'No way.' They don't want to deal with the risk," said owner Jen Kleck, who has sponsored trips to Baja about five times a year but hasn't been since July.

Charles Smith, spokesman for the U.S. consulate in Tijuana, said the U.S. government has not found a widespread increase in attacks against Americans, but he acknowledged many crimes go unreported. The State Department has long warned motorists on Mexico's border to watch for people following them, though no new warnings have been issued.

Mexican officials acknowledge crime has threatened a lifeblood of Baja's economy. In Playas de Rosarito, a city of 130,000, police were forced to surrender their weapons last month for testing to determine links to any crimes. Heavily armed men have patrolled City Hall since a failed assassination attempt on the new police chief left one officer dead. On Thursday the bullet-riddled bodies of a Tijuana police official and another man were found dumped near the beach.

"We cannot minimize what's happening to public safety," said Oscar Escobedo Carignan, Baja's new secretary of tourism. "We're going to impose order ... We're indignant about what's happening."

Tourist visits to Baja totaled about 18 million in 2007, down from 21 million the previous year, Escobedo said. Hotel occupancy dropped about 5 percentage points to 53 percent.

Hugo Torres, owner of the storied Rosarito Beach Hotel and the city's new mayor, estimates the number of visitors to Rosarito Beach since summer is down 30 percent.

In the city's Puerto Nuevo tourist enclave, which offers $20 lobster dinners and $1 margaritas, restaurant managers said sales were down as much as 80 percent from last year. One Saturday afternoon in October, masked bandits wielding pistols walked the streets and kidnapped two men—an American and a Spanish citizen—who were later released unharmed. Two people who were with them were shot and wounded.

Omar Armendariz, who manages a Puerto Nuevo lobster restaurant, is counting on the new state and city governments to make tourists feel safer. He has never seen fewer visitors in his nine years on the job.

"It's dead," he said.

Review: Villazon makes triumphant return

VIENNA, Austria (AP)—They clapped before Rolando Villazon sang a single note.

After all it was the star tenor's first performance since he suddenly canceled all engagements more than three months ago, for what his manager said were health reasons.

So for the audience cramming the Vienna State Opera on Saturday, it didn't matter what Villazon sang - or even whether he sang. The first sighting of the slightly built Mexican tenor in the opening minutes of Massenet's "Werther" set off a ripple that within moments grew to waves of thunderous applause interspersed with shouts of "bravo."

It was an almost unnerving outburst of warmth from what is known as one of the world's more reserved audiences.

But then, Villazon isn't just any tenor.

Many critics consider him as the heir in waiting to the likes of Placido Domingo and Jose Carreras. His performances with Russian diva Anna Netrebko sizzle, and the pair has been hyped up as opera's new "love couple." At its best, his voice is a mixture of silver and honey. And even if it isn't, his masterful theatrics are worth the price of even a better seat in any opera house.

So news in September that he was canceling his performances until at least early this year after a series of missed performances sent out shock waves beyond the reaches of the opera world.

His return Saturday set the stage for huge expectations that were mostly—but not completely—met.

While wonderfully supple—and surprisingly strong at times—Villazon's voice was occasionally lost in the more powerful orchestral passages—and it wasn't the fault of conductor Marco Armiliato.

Although he appeared to be hitting his high B's, it wasn't always apparent—because when trying too hard to be heard, Villazon's lyric tenor just seemed to top out among all those potent brass passages of the second and third acts.

Villazon himself appeared to be less than completely satisfied. Miguel Perez, who described himself as a friend of Villazon from Barcelona, said the tenor told him between breaks that he was "very happy" with the first act but "not very happy with the second."

"It's a very emotional evening for him," Perez told the AP.

If so, Villazon put those emotions to wonderful use. On Saturday, his theatrics made him the quintessential Werther, the emotionally vulnerable, brooding young man who obsesses over a woman he cannot have, shoots himself—and dies happily in her arms after she confesses her love for him.

His face and body tortured, Villazon made believers even of those who normally have trouble sitting through the opera's final 20-minute death scene. And he received a post-performance standing ovation from an audience that normally stays glued to its seats.

AP

Photo provided by the Vienna State Opera. They clapped before Rolando Villazon sang a single note, Saturday, Jan. 5, 2008.

But—dare one say it?

Villazon was outperformed Saturday.

As Charlotte, the woman Werther loves, Sophie Koch was flawless, her voice powerful and pliant, her physical presence commanding and her dramatics gripping.

The late great Wagnerian soprano Lilli Lehmann once said a mezzo-soprano is "a soprano without the high notes." She might have had to rethink that had she heard Koch in the upper registers Saturday. If Villazon's voice was silver, hers was an alloy of precious and rugged metals forged for strength, endurance and beauty.

Her Act III aria, "Va, laisse couler mes larmes" (Please let my tears flow), had stern-faced men sitting in the pricey seats reaching for the tissues. And where Villazon's French pronunciation was occasionally fuzzy, her diction was clear and precise.

More fine musical work came from the pit, with Armiliato easily alternating string-quartet like sounds from the Vienna State Opera Orchestra, with poignant woodwind and powerful brass passages as suitable underpinnings to the action on stage. Heavy and light, serious and incidental, Massenet's music was in good hands Saturday.

Also good: Markus Eiche as Albert, Charlotte's husband; soubrette Laura Tatulescu as the bubbly Sophie, Charlotte's kid sister, and Alfred Sramek as their father.

Director Andrei Serban's staging of Saturday's version that premiered two years ago put Werther not in Massenet's 19th century but the 1950s—a time of sexual and emotional suppression that is very fitting for this opera.

Film critics honor 'There Will Be Blood'

NEW YORK (AP)—The National Society of Film Critics on Saturday named "There Will Be Blood," a gritty tale about a turn-of-the-century oil man infected with greed, the best picture of 2007.

The film topped Julian Schnabel's "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly" and Joel and Ethan Coen's harrowing saga, "No Country for Old Men."

In "There Will Be Blood" - partly based on Upton Sinclair's 1920s novel "Oil!"—Daniel Day-Lewis plays a riveting and dynamic Daniel Plainview who loses his morals and mind in his Ahabesque quest for black gold.

The movie was directed by Paul Thomas Anderson, who was also tapped as best director, beating out Schnabel and the Coen brothers. Previous movies by Anderson include "Boogie Nights" and "Magnolia."

Acting honors went to Day-Lewis and Julie Christie for "Away from Her."

Best supporting actor honors went to Casey Affleck for "The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford" and Cate Blanchett who was one of several actors playing Bob Dylan in "I'm Not There."

"No End in Sight," made by Charles Ferguson, was chosen as the best documentary of the year. The movie depicted the costly mistakes made shortly after President Bush invaded Iraq, helping fuel a deadly insurgency.

The society also honored "There Will Be Blood" for cinematography, and Tamara Jenkins won best screenplay for "The Savages," a sibling comic drama.

The 42nd annual awards were given out by the National Society of Film Critics, an association of 61 movie critics from across the country.

Only 41 members cast ballots at the group's annual meeting Saturday in New York City, the society said in a news release.

The group's opinions often diverge from those of Oscar voters. This year's Oscar nominees will be announced Jan. 22.

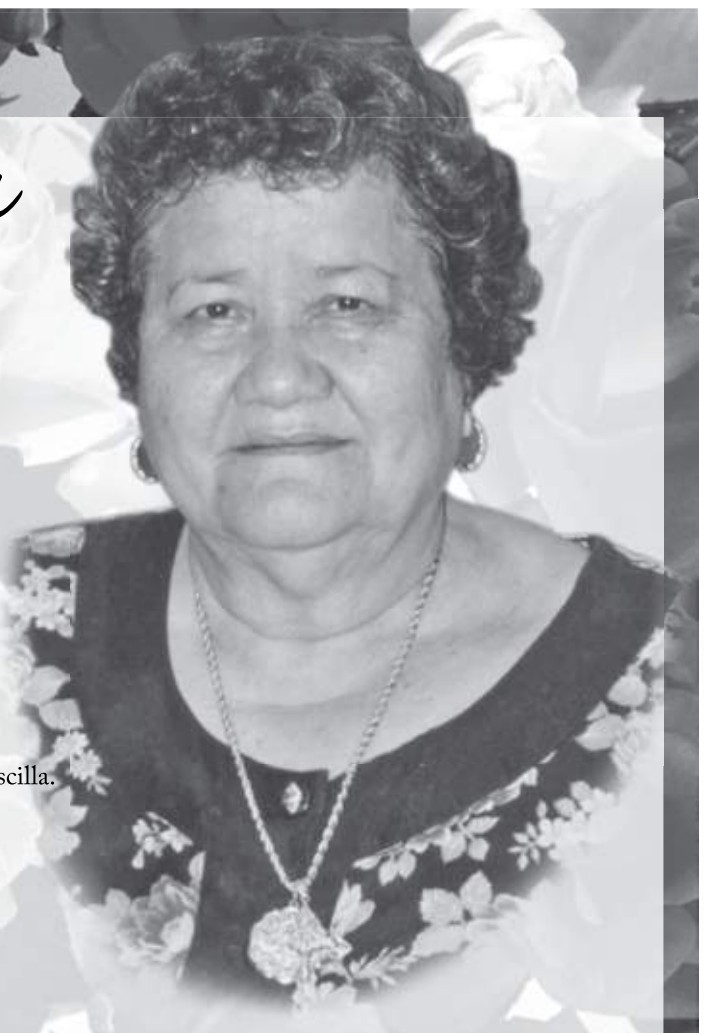
In Celebration of Her New Life

Margarita Sablan Cabrera Tudela

February 29, 1936 — January 01, 2008

In her new life, she now joins her:

Mother: Cecilia Palacios Sablan Cabrera Tudela
Father: Jose San Nicolas Cabrera
Step Father: Augustin Sablan Tudela
Sister: Carmen Cabrera Tudela
Brother: Antonio Sablan Cabrera
Mother In-Law: Rosa Palacios Cabrera Tudela
Father In-Law: Isidro Sablan Tudela
Son: Aldebert C. Tudela
Grandson: Robert Atalig Tudela
Granddaughter: Sabra Tudela Camacho



She was survived by her:

Husband: **Jose Cabrera Tudela**
Children: Francisco C./Cynthia A. Tudela — Aldebert/Lantin; Joe Randy/Connie (Joe Randy, Roquel Albie); Angelo/Connie (Keyona, Veronica, Vynna, Angelo Jr.); Sydney; Perry/Joelyn, Robert Dee.
Diego C./Victoria 0. Tudela — Pauline; Christopher/Geraldine; Dominic/Didiich (Dishun, Diviane Neline); Derrick; Elaine; Lionel.
Brian C. Tudela/Virginia Reyes — Christopher Allan, Amber Rosean; Nicholas Edward, Mercia Alexandra; Priscilla.
Priscilla C. Tudela — Roland Aldebert; Jocelyn Margaret (SayAna Lyn).
Bernice T./Calistro I. Reyes — Carleen/Benjamin (Leischeng); Calistro Jr./Phyllisina (Magdalen Ann, Toa L. Pangelinan, Malosi Manuel); Abraham; Lorraine.
Lillian C. Tudela/Jose M. Camacho — Maridel; Joeleen (Nicholas); †Sabra.
Alvin C./Rose Marie T. Tudela — Natasha; Shaina; Ladaina; Jeremiah, Cecilia, Java Lynn.
James C./Clarisa C. Tudela — James/Gwendolyn (James Jr., Priscilla); Joel/Shawna (Joel Peter); Christian; Isa.
Gary C. Tudela

Brothers In-Law / Sisters In-law:
†Basilisa C. Tudela
Alejandro C./†Romana V. Tudela/Ana Y. Tudela
†Candido C./Consolacion A. Tudela
Margaret T./†Edward J. Riva
†Ismael C. Tudela
†Natalie T./†Charles R. Ronsheimer
†Sylveria T./Irenio Asuncion
Teresita T./Daniel L. Camacho
Jesusa C. Tudela
†Inocencia C. Tudela
Rafael DLG. Tudela

Care Givers: Daisy Dela Cruz and Adelina Mandia

Survived by numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and grandchildren.

Daily Mass is being offered at 6:00 a.m. from January 2-8, 2008 at Mt. Carmel Cathedral except for Sunday, January 6, 2008, at 9:00 a.m. Nightly rosary is being prayed at 8:00 p.m. from January 2-8, 2008 at Mt. Carmel Cathedral. On Wednesday, January 9, 2008, her remains will be escorted from Nuestra Señora dela Paz Memorial Chapel to Mt. Carmel Cathedral for final viewing and last respects beginning 8:00 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11:00 a.m. followed by interment service at Mt. Carmel Cemetery.

Please join us in prayers.

Jose Cabrera Tudela, Children and Families.

SAG: Actors likely to snub Golden Globes

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Golden Globe-nominated actors are expected to snub the awards in support of striking Hollywood writers, the actors union said Friday, jeopardizing one of the entertainment industry's signature showcases.

NBC, however, said it was sticking by its plans to air the Jan. 13 ceremony, despite the uncertainty about how much—if any—star power the Globes could muster.

"The network plans to move forward with the broadcast at this point," NBC spokeswoman Rebecca Marks said, adding that it has yet to be determined which actors will participate.

Screen Actors Guild President Alan Rosenberg made the announcement after canvassing nominees during the past several weeks.

"There appears to be unanimous agreement that these actors will not cross" the picket lines to present or accept an award, he said in a prepared statement.

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which organizes the awards, said it was wrestling with the "unfortunate predicament."

"We are making every effort to work out a solution that will permit the Golden Globes to take place with the creative community present to participate," Jorge Camara, the group's president, said in a statement.

AP

Pickets including TV movie writer Anna Sandor, lower left, march outside a scheduled appearance by Republican presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee on the "Tonight Show With Jay Leno," which was to tape its first show without making a deal with striking Writers Guild of America writers, at NBC studios in Burbank, Calif., Wednesday, Jan. 2, 2008.

The association hoped to announce a resolution Monday, Camara said.

The writers strike, which began Nov. 5, has broad implications for the way Hollywood does business. Whatever deal is struck by writers on payment for shows offered on the Internet could affect talks with actors and directors, whose contracts expire next June.

The Golden Globes show brings in a reported $5 million for the association and millions more in advertising revenue for NBC.

On Friday, a dozen publicity firms representing what they called a majority of Golden Globe-nominated actors, writers and directors, as well as many stars invited to appear as presenters, released a letter sent to NBC Universal Chief Executive Jeff Zucker.

"After much discussion with our clients, we have concluded the vast majority of the talent we represent are not comfortable crossing a picket line," the letter said.

The stars would appear only if NBC and dick clark productions, which produces the show, reaches an interim agreement with the writers guild, the publicists told Zucker.

The Clark company lashed out at the guild in a statement Friday, citing repeated efforts to reach an interim agreement akin to the union deal with another independent company, Worldwide Pants, which produces David Letterman's show.

"We are disappointed that the WGA has refused to bargain with us in good faith. It is apparent that we are being treated differently from similarly situated production companies," the Clark company said.

An e-mail request for guild comment was not immediately answered.

Meanwhile, writers guild President Patric M. Verrone lauded the move by actors and said the "entire awards show season is being put in jeopardy by the intransigence of a few big media corporations."

In his statement, Verrone urged studios to resume talks that broke off Dec. 7.

The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents the studios in negotiations, did not immediately respond to an e-mail request for comment.

The Writers Guild of America had refused to grant a waiver to allow its members to work on the Globes, the People's Choice Awards and the prestigious Academy Awards.

A total of 72 actors are among this year's Golden Globe nominees. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association has repeatedly tried to seek the blessing of the writers guild.

The actors union said previously that the choice to attend was a personal one that its members would make for themselves.

In his statement Friday, Rosenberg also weighed in on the late-night talk shows, which are back on the air. Some are working without writers, while others made deals with the writers guild.

Rosenberg stopped short of pressing actors to skip the picketed shows, like Jay Leno's "Tonight."

"We urge our members to appear on the two programs that have independent agreements with the WGA, 'The Late Show with David Letterman' and `Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson,'" he said.

Actors who appear on other shows have to cross picket lines, he said.

That creates "the same situation that has led to the consensus among actors to skip the Golden Globes," Rosenberg said.

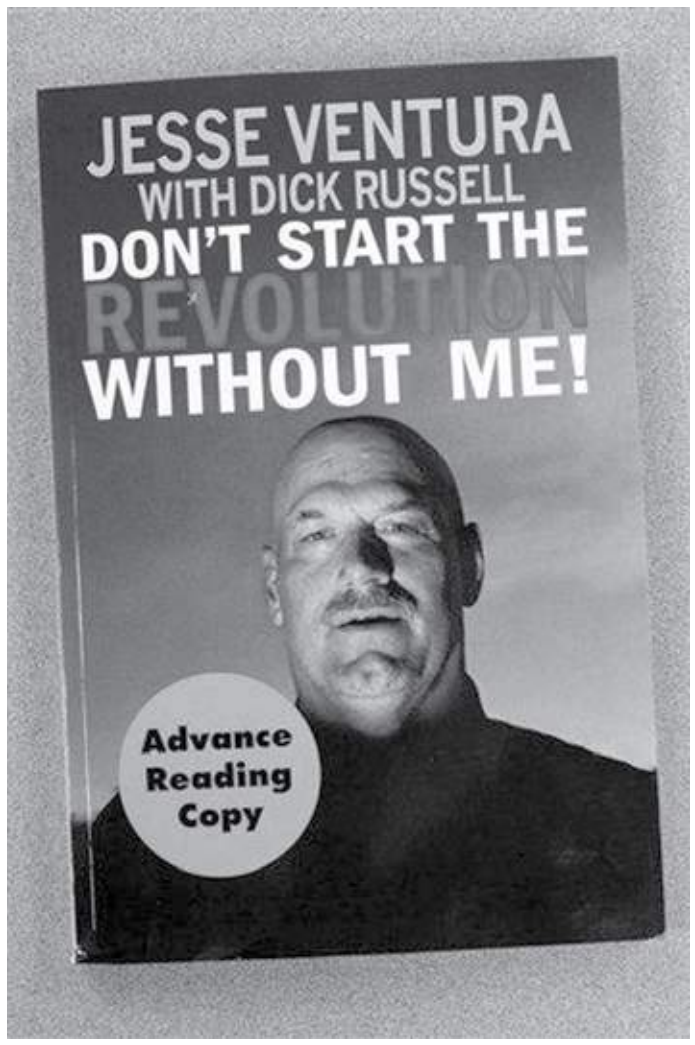
Vintage Ventura on display in new book

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Former Gov. Jesse Ventura may prefer Mexico to Minnesota these days, but his ex-constituents will still recognize his style if they pick up his upcoming book, "Don't Start the Revolution Without Me!"

Ventura uses the book—part personal memoir, part political rant—to rail against organized religion and the media, detail his brushes with celebrities and suggest that he should be viewed as a possible presidential candidate.

"Is it worth it to put my family and me out there, to take on a force that most of the American people are willing to go along with?" Ventura writes in the book, due in stores in April. "The government is supposed to be us, and it's not us anymore. It's been hijacked. Just when is somebody going to do something?"

The former pro wrestler hasn't reined in the outrageous opinions that often got him in trouble when he was governor from 1999 to 2003. The book is constructed as a loose travelogue of his and wife Terry's drive from Minnesota to Baja California, Mexico, where they now spend much of their time, but it leaves plenty of room for Ventura to digress into his obsessions.



AP

An advance copy of former Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura 's new book, "Don't Start the Revolution Without Me," is shown Friday, Jan. 4, 2008, in Minneapolis.

He discusses at length the assassination of President Kennedy. He scorns the idea that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone, and claims that during a trip to Dallas as governor a police officer warned him to avoid talking too much about "things that certain people don't want brought to light."

Ventura also airs his suspicion that "somebody in the government" sent people to infiltrate a government course he taught at Harvard University in 2004, on a day he discussed Kennedy's assassination. He repeatedly shows a fascination with conspiracy theories and surveillance, recalling several encounters he had with CIA agents while governor and claiming that his wife found an electronic listening device at their private home during his term.

He also discusses what he sees as the folly of organized religion. He argues that Catholic Church leaders should face racketeering charges for covering up sexual abuse by priests, then writes: "If Jesus came back today, I think he'd throw up."

Ventura recounts meeting Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, with whom he spent time during a trade mission and found to be engaging and perceptive. He says he asked Castro about Kennedy's assassination and that the Cuban leader denied involvement but also believed Oswald did not act alone.

A harsh critic of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Ventura says his doubts "have grown steadily" about the backstory to the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

"I think that bin Laden and al Qaeda were responsible for September 11th," Ventura writes. "But I also think it wasn't without some knowledge from our side."

Still, for someone who scorns all sides of the political debate, Ventura speculates on how his presidential bid would unfold. He ends the book with a series of fictional newspaper articles describing an insurgent 2008 campaign, with environmental activist Robert Kennedy Jr. as his running mate.

While the scenario starts off lighthearted—Ventura kicks off his candidacy at a Wrestlemania event—it takes a macabre turn in the end when he is shot by a Cuban exile upset over his opposition to the U.S. economic boycott against Cuba.

"While independent presidential candidate Jesse Ventura—in a coma for the fourth consecutive day—clung to life with family members gathered at his bedside, a White House press spokesman denied mounting allegations that accused assassin Raul Santana was part of a wider plot," one entry reads.

Thousands of original music recordings missing from Jamaican archives

KINGSTON,Jamaica(AP)—A massive collection of 1970s music including original recordings by reggae greats Bob Marley and Peter Tosh has disappeared from the archives of the former Jamaica Broadcasting Corp., authorities said Saturday.

The possible theft of thousands of vinyl records and compact discs is a blow to the island's history, said Olivia Grange, Jamaica's information minister.

Musicians and former JBC employees criticized the government for not properly maintaining the archives.

"The latest development is a national disgrace," said Gladstone Wilson, former program manager for JBC radio.

Workers at the newly formed Public Broadcasting Corp. of Jamaica noticed the disappearances earlier this week while touring the old JBC building. They had planned to use the archived material for their first programs, Grange said.

The archives also contain such iconic videos as the 1977 visit of Fidel Castro and the 1978 "One Love Peace Concert," in which Marley famously called two bitter Jamaican political rivals onstage to join hands.

Report: Spears released from hospital

AP
Britney Spears as she is wheeled out of the ambulance on a gurney at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center late Thursday night Jan. 3, 2008 in Los Angeles.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Television's "Dr. Phil" McGraw said Britney Spears was released from a hospital Saturday but still needs psychological help, the syndicated programs "Entertainment Tonight" and "The Insider" reported in a press release.

The troubled pop star was taken to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center by paramedics Thursday night after police were called to her home because of a dispute involving the two sons she had with ex-husband Kevin Federline.

"My meeting with Britney and some family members this morning in her room at Cedars leaves me convinced more than ever that she is in dire need of both medical and psychological intervention," McGraw told the programs.

"She was released moments before my arrival and was packing when I entered the room. We visited for about an hour before I walked with her to her car. I am very concerned for her," he said.

McGraw planned to talk more about Spears on his daytime talk show this week, the press release said.

Responding to an e-mail request for further comment from McGraw, a "Dr. Phil" publicist referred The Associated Press to his statement posted on the etonline.com Web site.

Medical center officials have had no comment on Spears, and authorities have given no full explanation of why she was hospitalized.

The incident at Spears' home lasted several hours. A Los Angeles police spokeswoman said Friday that officers at the scene determined that paramedics "needed to be called" but it was unclear why.

A message seeking comment from Spears' attorneys at the law firm Trope and Trope was not immediately returned Saturday.

At an emergency hearing Friday, a court commissioner suspended Spears' right to visit sons Sean Preston, 2, and Jayden James, 1. The commissioner also gave sole physical and legal custody to Federline.

Previously, Federline had temporary custody and Spears had court-monitored visitation.

The court set another hearing for Jan. 14.

Spears and Federline married in October 2004. Her life has spiraled downward since their divorce in July. She has been photographed without underwear and appeared to be drunk and out-of-control in public. She shaved her head, beat a car with an umbrella and spent a month in rehab.

Mom's retirement puts an end to sons' free ride at home

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: I have two adult sons living at home, ages 22 and 24. Both are working. I have recently retired, and my income has become half of what it was before. I told my sons that if they are to continue living here, they must pay room and board of $30 a week or find a place to live with the amenities they have here.

They are now ranting and raving and calling me a bad mother. Am I being unreasonable? I feel I have provided my sons with a good life, and it is now time for them to take some responsibility for their own support. It's time to grow up. Am I wrong?

My oldest son says he refuses to help me pay my mortgage! I told him to either pay the $120 a month or try to find a cheaper place to live. Any thoughts on this?

STRESSED-OUT MOM, LAKE VIEW, N.Y.

DEAR STRESSED OUT: You're making perfect sense to me. If your older boy was not centered so much on himself and his wants (notice, I didn't say "needs"), he would realize that you have made him a generous offer.

Because of your diminished income, of COURSE there is no question that your sons should contribute to the household expenses. It's possible they won't realize what a good deal they've been having until they try to match it in the real world. Stand your ground, Mom, and don't take any back talk.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married four years. During that time we have had three children. Our youngest was born three months ago with various medical problems including heart defects, enlarged kidneys, hearing problems and Down syndrome.

To top it off, I have recently been diagnosed with cancer. I start radiation and chemo next month. I am stressed to say the least, and being intimate with my husband right now is at the bottom of my list of things I need to do.

My husband is having a problem understanding why I am not interested in sex. He takes it personally when I don't accept his advances. I love him very much, and I'm grateful for everything he does for me and the kids, but right now I have no interest in sex. How can I get through to him without hurting his feelings? And how do I stop the advances so I don't feel so guilty?

STRESSED IN WISCONSIN

DEAR STRESSED: Excuse me? You've had three children in four years, you're caring for a newborn with physical and developmental disabilities and you're beginning treatment for a life-threatening illness. Frankly, I'm surprised you are still standing.

If necessary, drag your spouse to your OB/GYN, your pediatrician and your oncologist. Your husband may be the father of three, but he needs to learn the facts of life -- the first of which is that right now, you are physically and emotionally distracted and unable to perform as he would wish.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I recently attended a lovely party at a home with two baby grand pianos. One of the guests -- I'll call her "Sophie" -- is an accomplished pianist, and she dearly wanted to sit down and play.

We encouraged her but she refused, stating that the host and hostess might not appreciate having their party interrupted. Should Sophie have asked permission, or would that have created undue pressure on the hostess?

DAVID IN CUPERTINO, CALIF.

DEAR DAVID: It depends on the hosts. Some would welcome it; others might not. Sophie was correct to refrain from playing the piano without being asked to. It could have, indeed, been disruptive. And if either (or both) of the hosts is a serious musician, many musicians prefer that their instruments not be played by someone else.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." To order, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

AP
Actor Wesley Snipes leaves the Federal Courthouse in Ocala Fla. after posting a $1 million bond in this Dec. 8, 2006, file photo.

Wesley Snipes' attorneys file appeal to have tax evasion trial moved from Ocala

OCALA, Florida (AP)—Wesley Snipes is trying again to have his federal tax-evasion trial moved from this central Florida city.

Snipes' lawyer, Robert Barnes, filed a motion with a federal appeals court in Atlanta on Friday, arguing that U.S. District Judge William T. Hodges erred last month when he denied Snipes' motions to relocate and postpone the trial.

The actor's legal team argued Snipes cannot get a fair trial in Ocala, located about 80 miles (130 kilometers) north of Orlando. Snipes previously filed two motions to dismiss or transfer the trial because of racial prejudices.

Barnes also filed a motion Friday to put the trial—scheduled to begin Jan. 14—on hold until the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rules on the change of venue request.

A telephone message left for Snipes' attorney was not returned.

Federal prosecutors have previously said there is "no basis in reality" for Snipes' claims.

A federal indictment charges Snipes with fraudulently claiming refunds totaling almost $12 million in 1996 and 1997 for income taxes already paid. The 45-year-old star of the "Blade" trilogy and other films also was charged with failure to file returns from 1999 through 2004.

Snipes allegedly conspired with American Rights Litigators' founder Eddie Ray Kahn and tax preparer Douglas P. Rosile Sr. to file false refund claims based on a bogus argument that only income from foreign sources was subject to taxation.

Police: 'Bounty Hunter' associate caught naked in truck; says he was changing wet clothes

HONOLULU (AP)—A sidekick of TV bounty hunter Duane "Dog" Chapman turned himself in to authorities after a shopping center security guard reported seeing him naked in his pickup truck, performing a lewd act, police said.

But Tim Chapman's lawyer insisted Friday that his client spilled juice on himself and was just changing clothes Thursday night.

The guard told Chapman to put on his clothes and get out of the truck, police said. After dressing, Chapman started his truck and drove over a sidewalk, nearly hitting the guard, then drove off, police said.

The guard told police that he recognized Chapman from Duane Chapman's show "Dog the Bounty Hunter" and that he was performing an unspecified lewd act. Duane Chapman and Tim Chapman are not related.

Tim Chapman's attorney, Brook Hart, said it was all a misunderstanding.

"It was simply a man who wet his pants with orange juice inadvertently and was changing them, doing nothing wrong at all and believing he had sufficient privacy to do it," Hart said.

Police said they were investigating whether to charge Chapman, 42.

The A&E television network put the show on hold indefinitely in November after the release of a private phone conversation in which Duane Chapman repeatedly used a racial slur to describe his son's girlfriend. He has apologized repeatedly.

Actor Austin Nichols pleads guilty

JACKSON, Mich. (AP)—Austin Nichols, who portrayed the title character in HBO's "John From Cincinnati," has pleaded guilty to impaired driving and paid a $1,000 fine.

The 27-year-old actor pleaded by mail on Thursday to a misdemeanor charge of driving while visibly impaired.

The plea stems from an incident in Jackson last August, when Nichols was staying with family at nearby Clark Lake.

"John From Cincinnati" was canceled last year. Nichols also appeared in "Deadwood."

AP
Actor Austin Nichols arrives at the special screening of Glory Road, Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2006, in New York.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

I HATE WAITING FOR THE SCHOOL BUS ON DAYS LIKE THESE.
BLUSTERY COLD DAYS SHOULD BE SPENT PROPPED UP IN BED WITH A MUG OF HOT CHOCOLATE AND A PILE OF COMIC BOOKS.
THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO BE DOING RIGHT NOW.
AS SOON AS I GRADUATE, I'M GOING TO SPEND EVERY WINTER THAT WAY.
I WISH YOUR BUS WOULD COME. MY HOT CHOCOLATE WILL GET COLD.
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1/7
WATTERSON

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

Y'know that scale you received for Christmas?
HO, HO, HO.
ENOUGH ALREADY!!
1/7
BRIAN BASSET ©2005 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE GOCOMICS.COM

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

Glenn McCoy
DUE TO THE RECORD SNOWFALL LAST NIGHT, EVERY PERSON ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH IS OFF WORK TODAY EXCEPT FOR ENO CAMINO.
END
1-7 2008 © Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate
www.gocomics.com

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

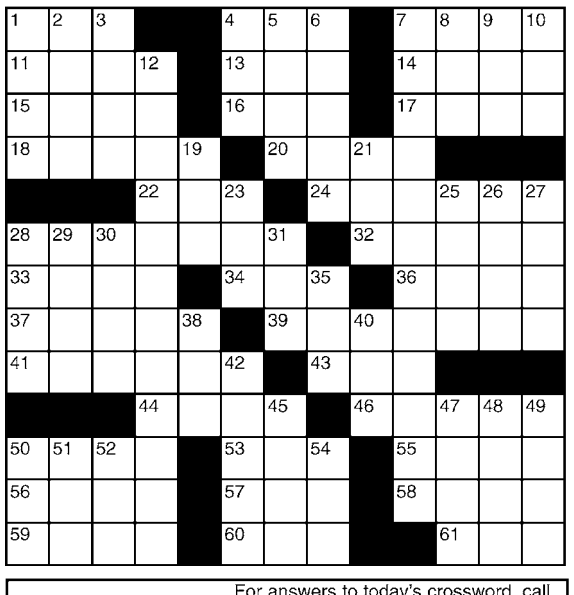
ACROSS
1 Triangular sail
4 Vagrant
7 Particular
11 Nabisco brand
13 Seventh Greek letter
14 PBS science show
15 Chicken —
16 Earner's burden
17 Raced
18 — Park, Colo.
20 Stereo set
22 Scepter
24 Contemporary
28 Bullring horseman
32 Aladdin's ally
33 Algerian port
34 Prompt
36 Lends a hand
37 Actor McDowall
39 Fair-haired females
41 Resulted (from)
43 Craze
44 Hammer target
46 Nutty people
50 Newspaper page
53 Party bowlful
55 Monad
56 Conflagration
57 "CSI" find
58 Albacore
59 Phobia
60 Evergreen type
61 Firmament

DOWN
1 One-liner, e.g.
2 Eye part
3 Borscht veggie
4 "You — Your Life"
5 Orem's state
6 Saying
7 Thoroughly
8 Upper surface
9 Abel's mom
10 Frenzied
12 Type of sports wager
19 Turf
21 Pea soup, e.g.
23 Medic
25 Oklahoma city
26 Carnival attraction
27 "Untouchables" hero
28 Skin opening
29 Press
30 Scoundrels
31 Abrade
35 Sprite
38 Verily
40 Erstwhile acorn
42 Sean Combs alias
45 Queue
47 Responsibility
48 Eccentricity
49 Remain
50 Vacationing
51 Chart format
52 Historic period
54 Dog's "hand"

Solution time: 24 mins.

■	O	F	A	L	L	■	P	A	I	N	S	■
I	N	A	D	A	Y	■	I	N	L	A	W	S
P	E	L	V	I	S	■	V	E	L	V	E	T
O	W	L	■	N	O	H	O	W	■	A	D	O
D	A	I	S	■	L	E	T	■	C	H	E	W
S	Y	N	O	D	■	M	A	T	R	O	N	S
■	■	■	R	E	A	■	L	E	U	■	■	■
R	O	S	T	E	R	S	■	A	M	P	L	Y
O	R	T	S	■	S	O	L	■	B	R	I	E
O	D	E	■	D	E	B	A	R	■	O	V	A
K	E	L	V	I	N	■	D	E	L	V	E	R
S	A	L	I	V	A	■	L	A	Y	E	R	S
■	L	A	P	E	L	■	E	M	E	R	Y	■

Saturday's answer 1-7



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: David Yost, 39; Nicolas Cage, 44; Katie Couric, 51; Kenny Loggins, 60

Happy Birthday: Your strengths will show this year, contributing to the opportunities that come your way. You can resolve settlements, legal issues or financial concerns and push yourself toward greater accomplishments. This is your year to take on the world. Remember not to let things get too big to handle. Your numbers are 5, 16, 27, 30, 32, 46

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You will have a tendency to overreact and this can lead to a mistake you'll regret. Do not question others or complain. Instead, do whatever you are supposed to do in order to show your efficiency. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Put your plans and ideas into play. A trip or phone call can make a huge difference to your future. Don't hold back when it comes to the way you feel or what you want. A new attitude will bring positive results. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You may be all wrapped up in issues that deal with a partnership today but you should be concentrating on money, investments and building a solid home base. You can come up with a workable plan to better your surroundings and ease any debt. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You will be able to change your direction or learn something that will help you advance. Emotions must be kept intact. It will work against you if you show your vulnerability. Be accepting of change. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You may have to go a distance in order to accomplish your goals. Love and romance are looking promising and the chance to do something interesting with the person whose company you value should be put into play. Planning a vacation should be on your agenda. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Show your brighter side. Get into a self-improvement program or do something with the younger or older people in your life. Rewarding yourself can be healthy mentally, physically and emotionally. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You cannot count on others to help you out. Complaints coupled with overreacting and overdoing will lead to setbacks. Don't get angry. Keep the peace and focus on your own creative endeavors. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Look for answers and you will find them today. Solutions can be incorporated if you are patient and diligent about following through. Talks will help you resolve issues and a change in your own routine will lead to greater strength and energy. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You are your own worst enemy today. Don't initiate change but be willing to do things a little differently if it will help you get ahead. Ego must not play a role in your decisions or you will be left with less than what you started out with. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You'll have mixed emotions regarding a contract, deal or settlement. Take the most unlikely route. It's the element of surprise that will keep you in the running. Letting your feelings rule will only lead you astray. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): A little love and affection can go a long way today. Plan something special for someone you care about. Dealing with youngsters, family or loved ones will lead to an added respect from others. Help others without promising more than you can deliver. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Emotions will lead to change and, although it may be tough at first, the end results will be beneficial. Listen and decipher who is in your corner. Stabilizing your position will be the most important factor so don't let anger stand in your way. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are a great competitor—sturdy, steadfast and popular. You are courageous and respect tradition. You are generous, organized and precise in all you do.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

5		7				3		2
			2	8	9			
4		9				1		6
	4		3		7		2	
	3						5	
	5		4		6		1	
2		5				7		1
			6	9	2			
8		3				2		9

Difficulty Level ★ 1/07

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	7	9	2	6	8	3	5	4
5	4	2	9	7	3	1	8	6
3	6	8	5	1	4	2	7	9
9	8	3	1	2	5	4	6	7
4	1	7	6	3	9	8	2	5
6	2	5	4	8	7	9	3	1
8	9	4	7	5	2	6	1	3
7	3	1	8	9	6	5	4	2
2	5	6	3	4	1	7	9	8

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/05

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

MORTGAGE PAYMENTS **Solution: 7 letters**

D	O	P	T	I	O	N	W	Y	T	P	E	C	C	A
H	E	L	A	I	C	E	P	S	E	S	U	O	H	P
I	N	T	E	R	E	S	T	C	S	A	V	E	O	E
G	P	O	A	K	T	A	L	E	C	N	R	S	I	V
H	R	T	E	R	M	I	N	A	T	E	D	S	C	A
C	I	A	K	D	E	T	L	N	R	N	A	B	E	R
O	N	L	E	N	I	L	E	C	U	(D)	E	R	Y	I
S	C	X	T	W	A	C	E	F	S	(A)	P	O	E	A
T	I	L	C	F	A	B	L	C	T	(T)	L	K	N	B
F	P	R	O	P	E	R	T	Y	C	(E)	A	E	O	L
I	L	Z	P	S	F	E	L	L	R	A	N	R	M	E
R	E	E	Y	K	I	T	S	E	C	U	R	I	T	Y
S	D	R	C	Y	L	N	F	N	G	O	D	N	O	C
T	B	O	N	U	S	F	G	D	W	A	P	P	L	Y
Y	L	H	T	N	O	M	H	S	A	C	L	L	U	F

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Accelerated, Accept, Annual, Apply, Bank, Bonus, Borrow, Broker, Call, Capped, Cash, Choice, Client, Closings, Condo, Copy, Cost, Date, Fees, First, Fixed, Full, Funds, High, House, Interest, Legal, Lend, Life, Lock, Money, Monthly, Offer, Option, Part, Plan, Principle, Property, Reduce, Save, Security, Special, Terminate, Total, Trust, Variable, Week, Witness, Years, Zero

Last Saturday's Answer: Record

To order THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volume 15, 22, 23, 24, 25 or 26, send $5.95 each (US funds only) payable to Universal Press Syndicate plus $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to WONDERWORD, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-255-6734, ext. 6688. Order online at upuzzles.com (Contain 43 puzzles, 9 of which are the larger 20 x 20 size)

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT RESIDENTIAL

Apartment room for rent: Fully furnished 1 brm, T/B, 24-hr water $210/month, near Conwood | Tel. 287-1372, 235-6748

---

2 br apartment w/ laundry facility. Beach Rd., Chalan Laulau. Behind former Hakubotan bldg. Close to beach walking path. Call 483-1974.

Apartment for rent: 2br, 1bt, 24hrs water, Koblerville • $230/month-no deposit. Tel.: 288-0728 look for Edson

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 BOAT CARPENTER (M 6150)
Salary:$4.00/hour. Benefits: Workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: Pacific Quest Inc. @322-5077/287-1073.

---

2 WAITRESS/WAITER (M 6151)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & worksmen compensation will be provided. Contact: AHN Corp. dba Skyway Café @288-4188.

1 COOK (M 6152)
Salary:$4.25/hour. Benefits: Medical & worksmen compensation will be provided. Contact: AHN Corp. dba Skyway Café @288-4188.

2 POKER ATTENDANT (M 6153)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & worksmen compensation will be provided. Contact: AHN Corp. dba Skyway Café @288-4188.

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1 ACCOUNTANT (M 6154)
Salary:$4.50/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing allowance; 2 duty meals; medical insurance; vacation leave & workers compensation. Contact: WDI Saipan, Inc. dba Tony Roma's/Capricciosa @322-7516.

---

1 TRAVEL OPERATION MANAGER (M 6155)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & worker compensation. Contact: Top Development Inc. @235-6072/5.

1 OVER HAULER (M 6156)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & worker compensation. Contact: Top Development Inc. @235-6072/5.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (M 6157)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing deduction; $100.00/food deduction; medical provided & workmen compensation. Contact: Martin C. Pangelinan @234-6076.

---

1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (M 6158)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self provide food; medical & workmen's compensation. Contact: Javili General Partnership dba YJC Autoshop @235-4928.

Subscribe to CNMI's First Daily Newspaper
235-NEWS

112 SEWER, HAND (M 6159)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Medical & workers compensation. Contact: Onwel Manufacturing (Saipan), Ltd. @234-9522.

---

2 SUPERVISOR (M 6160)
Salary:$3.55-$4.00/hour. Benefits: Free housing; self provided food; medical provided; workers compensation coverage & free transportation to & from work place. Contact: Jaguar Company Limited @233-1545.

15 SINGER (M 6161)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; self provided food; medical provided; workers compensation coverage & free transportation to & from work place. Contact: Jaguar Company Limited @233-1545.

10 DANCER (M 6162)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; self provided food; medical provided; workers compensation coverage & free transportation to & from work place. Contact: Jaguar Company Limited @233-1545.

---

2 SEWING MACHINE REPAIRER (M 6163)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self housing; self food; provided workmen's compensation & medical expenses. Contact: Yong Jia Corp. @288-3839.

---

1 HOUSEWORKER (M 6164)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Charge by the employer $100.00/housing; charge by the employer $100.00/food & medical benefits. Contact: Mr. & Mrs. Antonio T. Lim &/or Carmen Ong. @234-1629.

---

1 AUTO MECHANIC (M 6165)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Free housing; medical benefits & workmen's compensation. Contact: Transamerica (Saipan) Corporation @234-1629.

---

1 ELECTRICAL ENGINEER (MANAGER) (M 6166)
Salary:$650.00-$1,800.00/monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: JAP Professional Corp. dba GEMS (Guam Electrical Material Supply) @235-5902.

WHATZIT Solution:
A race between life and death

---

4 MASSEUSE/MASSEUR (M 6167)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self arranged food; medical & workmen's compensation provided by employer. Contact: American Global Voice Ltd. @233-8119.

WANTED
AVON
REPRESENTATIVE
Earn easy additional income
30% to 50% commission.
Please call Jojo Faller
at 483-1971, 323-4455

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB08-DEQ-024

OPENING DATE: JANUARY 24, 2008 **TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) X-RAY FLORESCENT (XRF) FIELD SCREENING INSTRUMENT WITH ACCOMPANYING ACCESSORIES FOR THE DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICK-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ FRANK M. RABAULIMAN
DIRECTOR OF DEQ

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP: RFP08-DPW-023

SUBMISSION: JANUARY 30, 2008 **TIME: 4:00 P.M.**

"SECURITY SERVICES FOR THE MARPI SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITY"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED FOR 9:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME, JANUARY 16, 2008 AT DPW – SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT OFFICE, AT THE LOWER BASE REFUSE TRANSFER STATION.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ DIEGO B. SONGSONG
ACTING SECRETARY OF PUBLIC WORKS

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

WHATZIT™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

LIFE DERBY DEATH

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Find today's solution in this section

POSITION VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

RECEPTIONIST / COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT

The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, has a full-time position vacancy for a Receptionist / Collections Assistant. The successful candidate must be a US citizen or IR, be a high school graduate, and have good English language and bookkeeping skills. Duties will include greeting visitors to the Office, answering the telephone, assisting with the Firm's collections practice, and other related duties. The salary is competitive.

Applications may be obtained at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe. Completed applications must be accompanied by a police clearance and proof of US citizenship or IR status. No telephone calls, please.

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune's* print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

Print*	
• 1st position	$10
• 2nd position	$3
• Succeeding positions	$1

LOWER RATES! Effective Feb. 3, 2007

Combo (Print and Online)*	
• 1st position	$13
• 2nd position	$4
• Succeeding positions	$2

Radio (KCNM/KZMI)	
• Up to 6 positions	$5
• More than 6 positions	$10

*These rates apply to all vacancy announcements that include corresponding benefits and which announcements are all under the same company name.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.
- KCNM/KZMI: All ads placed on Friday (9am to 5pm) will be for Monday's radio announcement.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Jaguars stun Steelers on late field goal

PITTSBURGH (AP)—Never in the Steelers' 75 seasons had a team beaten them twice in Pittsburgh in the same season. The Jaguars beat history—and the Steelers—despite a memorable fourth-quarter collapse that nearly cost Jacksonville its season.

Josh Scobee saved the game by kicking a 25-yard field goal with 37 seconds remaining and the Jaguars came back after squandering an 18-point lead in the fourth quarter to beat the Steelers 31-29 on Saturday night in an AFC wild-card game that was wild in every sense of the word.

Jacksonville appeared to be done after Najeh Davenport's second 1-yard TD run of the game gave the Steelers a 29-28 lead with about six minutes remaining. But quarterback David Garrard, not a great runner, found a seam on a convert-or-else fourth-and-2 play and rambled 32 yards to the Steelers 11 with 1:56 left.

"Right before we went out, I pulled the guys together and said, `Guys, you got to love it, this is what we're here for,'" coach Jack Del Rio said. "Now let's go out and make some plays and win it."

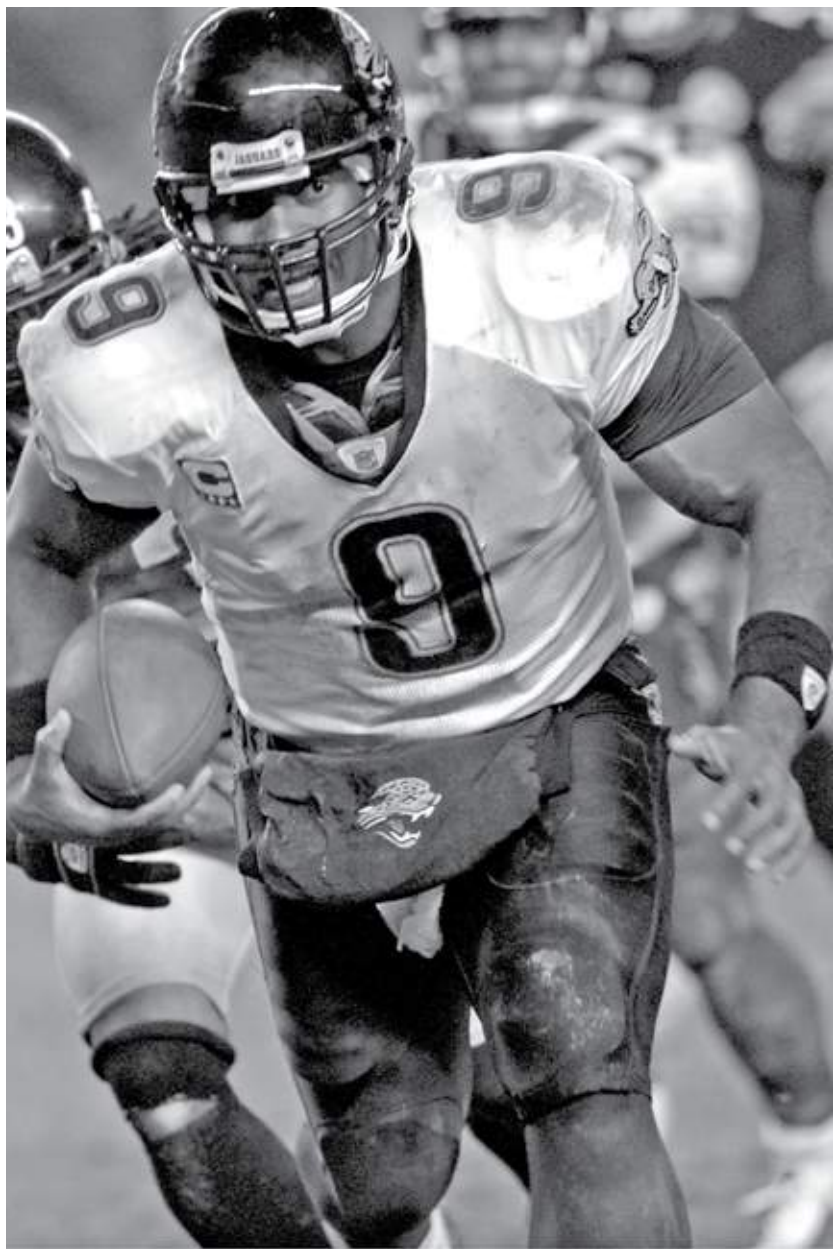
Garrard aided the Steelers' comeback by throwing two interceptions—one less than he had all season—only to come up with the play that may have saved the Jaguars' season.

"They kind of lost their gaps, they thought pass, I was able to get through there," Garrard said. "I just wanted to get a first down. I did enough to get into field-goal range and that was all I was thinking about."

Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger (29-of-42, 337 yards) put the Steelers into a deep hole by throwing three interceptions before halftime, then got rolling after he began lining up in a shotgun formation and threw touchdown passes to Santonio Holmes (37 yards) and Heath Miller (14 yards) in 4 1/2 minutes of the fourth quarter to get Pittsburgh within 28-23.

The Steelers rallied from 15 points down to tie Jacksonville late in the Jaguars' 29-22 win at Heinz Field on Dec. 16 but couldn't close the deal. They couldn't this time, either, even though Roethlisberger, shouldering the Steelers' offense virtually by himself with no running game, was 17-of-23 for 263 yards and two touchdowns in the second half.

The Jaguars have beaten Pittsburgh four times in the last three seasons, including their 29-22 win on Dec. 16, and they appeared ready to do easily by building a 28-10 lead behind backup running back Maurice Jones-Drew's playmaking.



AP

Jacksonville Jaguars quarterback David Garrard (9) runs past Pittsburgh Steelers' Tyrone Carter (23) for a 32 yard-gain during fourth quarter of an NFL wild card playoff football game in Pittsburgh, Saturday, Jan. 5, 2008.

Jones-Drew, escaping Jaguars star Fred Taylor's shadow in a performance filled with big plays, scored on a 43-yard swing pass after one of Roethlisberger's interceptions and a 10-yard run that provided the 18-point lead. Jones-Drew's 96-yard kickoff return the first time Jacksonville touched the ball set up Taylor's 1-yard touchdown run and immediately answer the Steelers' opening-possession 80-yard touchdown drive.

"It was a tough way to get a win and we got one," Jones-Drew said. "It kind of got a little hectic when we were losing, but David made that big run at the end."

The Jaguars came in off six wins in their last eight games, while the Steelers—missing five starters, including star running back Willie Parker—limped into the postseason with three losses in four games and four in seven.

With no Parker, the NFL's leading rusher until he broke his right leg Dec. 20 against St. Louis, the Steelers needed to be creative offensively and Roethlisberger was exactly that on the opening possession. Using rollouts and swing passes to gain the yardage they normally get on Parker's running, the Steelers drove 80 yards for Davenport's 1-yard TD run and a 7-0 lead.

Roethlisberger was 5-of-6 for 59 yards, including a 31-yard catch by Hines Ward on third-and-4, and a 15-yard penalty for a horse collar tackle by John Henderson on a sack of Roethlisberger also helped.

That efficient, creative Steelers offense disappeared the rest of the half, replaced by the familiar mistake-a-minute style so common when they ended five seasons with home playoff losses under former coach Bill Cowher from 1992-2004.

Jacksonville wasn't rattled by the early score in a stadium where it won in its last two visits. Jones-Drew cut back twice during a 96-yard return of the ensuing kickoff, helped by a missed tackle by Bryant McFadden, and Taylor scored from the 1 on the next play—his second TD in a span of two minutes at Heinz Field. Taylor decided that 29-22 game on Dec. 16 with a 12-yard touchdown run late in the fourth quarter.

So much for early momentum by the Steelers, who were playing their first home playoff game since a 41-27 loss to New England in the AFC championship game in January 2005.

Mathis, who decided Jacksonville's 23-17 overtime win at Heinz Field in 2005 with an interception return touchdown in overtime, jumped on a slant pattern by Holmes early in the second quarter for his 63-yard interception return. Two plays before, the Steelers appeared to get a big break when a tipped pass intended for Miller deflected to Ward for a 33-yard gain, a mini-Immaculate Reception 35 years and two weeks after the original.

Roethlisberger, perhaps attempting to prove he wasn't discouraged by that interception, went right back at Mathis on Pittsburgh's next possession—and was intercepted by him again. The Jaguars promptly scored two plays later, on a 43-yard swing pass to Jones-Drew that made it 21-7.

With the Steelers driving late in the half, after Scobee's missed 46-yard field goal attempt, Roethlisberger was intercepted yet again by rookie backup lineman Derek Landri.

Seahawks 35, Redskins 14

At Seattle, the Seattle Seahawks rallied to oust sentimental favorites the Washington Redskins in the NFL wild-card playoffs.

The Redskins rode the passion and momentum of the last month one more time, overcoming a 13-point, second-half deficit.

Then the Seahawks came back with three touchdowns of their own. Matt Hasselbeck hit D.J. Hackett with a 20-yard scoring pass, and Marcus Trufant and Jordan Babineaux picked off Todd Collins' first interceptions in a decade, returning them for touchdowns.

Seattle, improving to 8-1 at home, will travel to the Green Bay Packers next Saturday.

"I think two teams that cared a lot slugged it out," Seattle coach Mike Holmgren said. "And we won it."

The Redskins go home with their four-game winning streak over, their mission to play and win for slain teammate Sean Taylor coming to an emotional end.

"I can't believe it's over with for us," Washington linebacker London Fletcher said. "It just seemed our story was going to be written all the way to the Super Bowl for us."

It took 2 1/2 quarters for the Redskins to get going, but for a while they seemed impossible to stop. Down 13-0, they practically ran downfield with the no-huddle offense behind mothballed quarterback Collins to score their first touchdown. Then came an interception by LaRon Landry, who took over at free safety after Taylor's shooting death in November, to set up another TD that gave Washington a 14-13 lead with 12:38 to play.

But two special teams gaffes kept the Seahawks going. Shaun Suisham was wide left on a field goal from 30 yards after Seattle returner Nate Burleson misjudged a kickoff that was recovered by the Redskins. And a 33-yard punt by Derrick Frost gave Seattle good field position to set up the go-ahead touchdown.

As they have over the second half of the season, the Seahawks preferred the pass over the run. Hasselbeck finished 20-for-32 for 229 yards with one touchdown and two interceptions. Hackett caught six passes for 101 yards. Partick Kerney and Leroy Hill were among Seahawks defenders who made life miserable for the Redskins. Collins was sacked three times and hit repeatedly.

Collins went 29-for-50 for 266 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions. Clinton Portis, who had at least 100 yards from scrimmage in each game of the Washington winning streak, ran 20 times for 52 yards and caught four passes for 28 yards.

Rice, Rutgers win International Bowl

TORONTO (AP)—Ray Rice ran over Ball State and through the 2,000-yard barrier in the International Bowl, giving Rutgers the second postseason win in its 138-year history.

Rice had four touchdowns and 280 yards, including a career-long 90-yard score to lift the Scarlet Knights to a 52-30 win in the International Bowl on Saturday.

Rutgers (8-5), which played the first college football game, hadn't won a bowl game before last year. Now the program has won two in a row, following a 37-10 win over Kansas State in the 2006 Texas Bowl with another blowout.

Ball State (7-6), meanwhile, is still waiting for its first bowl win in four tries.

Rice, whose 25 touchdowns this season are a school record, has yet to announce whether he'll skip his senior season and enter the NFL draft. Players who choose to declare for the draft must do so by Jan. 15.

His coach, Greg Schiano, already made a similar decision. After speaking with Michigan about the Wolverines' job opening in December, Schiano stayed with Rutgers.

Rice made that decision look wise on Saturday.

On the Scarlet Knights' first drive of the third quarter, Rice took the ball at his own 10-yard line, broke through the line of scrimmage and raced down the left sideline, fighting off two tacklers before diving into the end zone.

Rice ended the third with a 12-yard run, making him the first Big East player to break 2,000 yards. Rice's 2,012 yards this season are behind only Central Florida's Kevin Smith and Tulane's Matt Forte.

Rice has gone over 100 yards in a school-record eight straight games.

Rutgers fans chanted "One more year!" after Rice's fourth touchdown run on a one-yard dive late in the third.

Facing a Ball State defense ranked 99th in the nation against the run, Rice set the tone early, running left for a 21-yard gain on Rutgers' first play from scrimmage.

Five plays later, quarterback Mike Teel found Tim Brown wide open over the middle for a 36-yard touchdown pass as Rutgers took an early 7-0 lead.

Two possessions later, Rice made it 14-0, carrying the ball four straight times and finishing a six play, 70-yard drive with a 1-yard run.

Rice did it all by himself on a second-quarter touchdown drive, rushing five times and catching an eight-yard pass from Teel, before another 1-yard plunge gave Rutgers a 24-6 lead.

Teel completed 16 of 25 attempts for 303 yards and three touchdowns, including a 35-yard scoring strike to Tiquan Underwood in the fourth.

Teel set a school record with his 20th TD pass of the season, a 47-yarder to Kenny Britt at 4:21 of the fourth.

Dante Love scored Ball State's first touchdown on a 10-yard pass from quarterback Nate Davis in the third. Tight end Darius Hill caught two TD passes in the fourth.

Davis completed 25 of 49 for 291 yards and three touchdowns but was sacked seven times. Love caught 13 passes for 169 yards and Ian McGarvey kicked three field goals for the Cardinals.

The International Bowl is the only NCAA Division I football game played outside the United States. Cincinnati beat Western Michigan 27-24 in last year's event.

Celtics too good for Pistons in clash of hot teams

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP)—The Eastern Conference finals in June might look a lot like a matchup did in January. Glen Davis scored a career-high 20 points, giving Boston's Big Three a huge lift in a 92-85 win over the Detroit Pistons on Saturday night in a marquee game that lived up to its billing.

For the first time since 1981, two NBA teams entered a game on January 5 with a combined 54 wins. For the first time since 2000, two teams played with each riding at least an eight-game winning streak. Their combined winning percent of .844 was the third highest in the shot clock era.

The Celtics extended their winning streak, which started after losing to Detroit at home, to nine games. Boston snapped Detroit's streak at 11 games.

Boston (29-3) topped Detroit (26-8) after overcoming a 12-point deficit and foul trouble.

Kevin Garnett was called for his third foul at the 7:34 mark of the first quarter, which helped Detroit go on a 17-0 run take a 20-10 lead.

Garnett returned early in the second quarter and helped Boston pull within two points at halftime.

When Garnett was in the game, Boston outscored Detroit by 23. When the superstar was on the bench, the Pistons outscored the Celtics by 16.

The Pistons clung to a three-point lead after three quarters. Then the Celtics took control with a 10-2 run—with five points from Davis—to take a 79-74 lead.

Detroit's comeback hopes were hurt by uncharacteristic misses at the free throw line by Chauncey Billups and Richard Hamilton, who have combined to shoot nearly 90 percent from the line this season.

Hamilton pulled the Pistons within a point with 2 1/2 minutes remaining, then Davis answered with a three-point play on a swooping layup and added two more shots in the lane in the final minute to seal one of the biggest wins for Boston in years.

Paul Pierce scored 19 points for the Celtics, Garnett added 15 and Eddie House scored 10 points to join Davis as key contributors off the bench. Ray Allen was limited to nine points in part because he had five fouls.

Hamilton had 18 points, Billups scored 17, Rasheed Wallace added 16 points and Jason Maxiell contributed 13 points off the bench.

Nets 113, Hawks 107

At Atlanta, New Jersey won its fifth straight, rallying past Atlanta.

Jason Kidd had 10 points, 14 assists and 13 rebounds for his ninth triple-double of the season.

Atlanta suffered its fourth straight loss.

Rockets 103, Knicks 91

At Houston, Yao Ming scored 30 points, grabbed eight rebounds and dished out six assists to lead Houston past New York.

The Rockets have now won six straight meetings with New York.

The Knicks have dropped seven games in a row, and 13 of 14 on the road this season.

Hornets 118, Suns 113

At Phoenix, New Orleans rallied to snap Phoenix's four-game winning streak.

Chris Paul scored 28 points, including 14 in the fourth quarter, and had 10 assists for the Hornets.

The win was the Hornets' 23rd of the season, tying Phoenix for the most in the Western Conference. It also ended the Suns' streak of 20 consecutive victories when leading entering the fourth quarter.

Bulls 94, Kings 93

At Chicago, Ben Wallace hit the go-ahead free throw and blocked a jump shot with a second left to lift Chicago to a wild win over Sacramento.

The block came after Wallace hit the first of two free throws with 3.2 seconds left.

Sacramento's Justin Williams grabbed the rebound after the second foul shot, and the Kings called a timeout. Brad Miller caught the inbound pass, and Wallace blocked his shot.

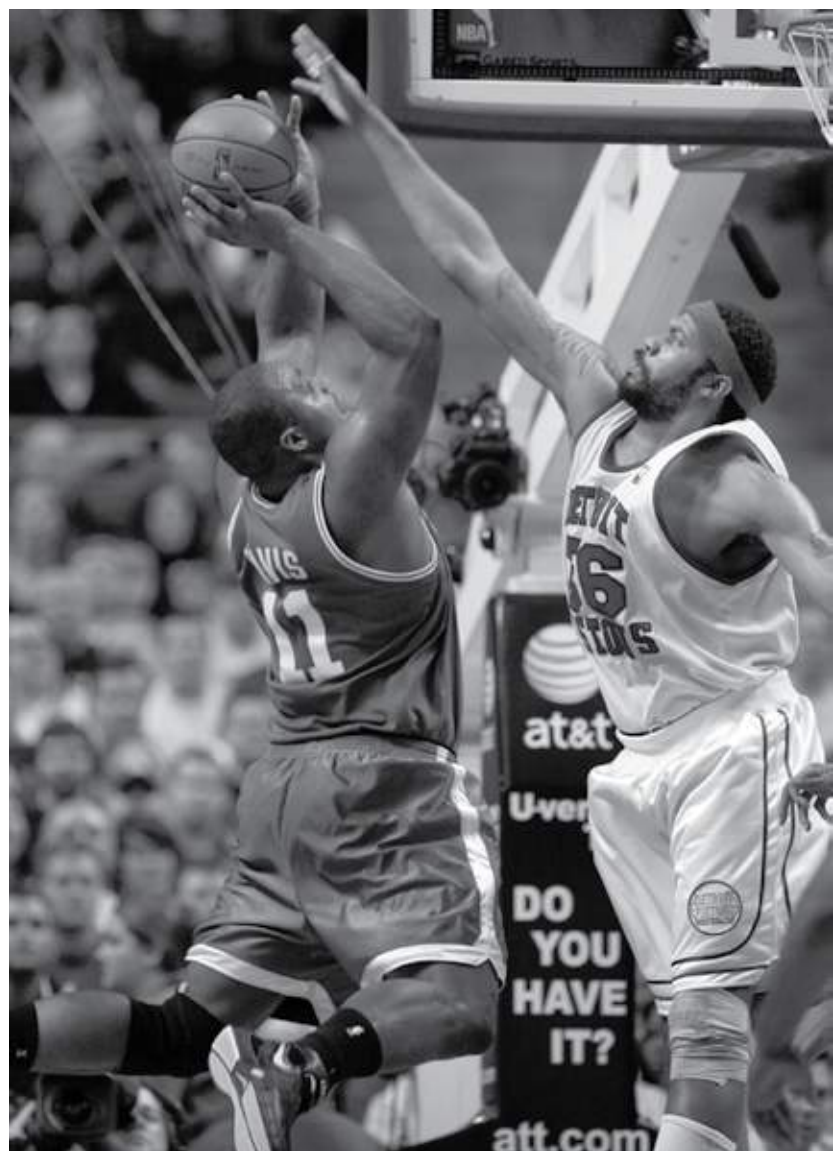
Trail Blazers 103, Jazz 89

At Portland, Oregon, Martell Webster scored 24 points in the third quarter as Portland got its revenge against Utah.

Earlier this week, the Jazz snapped a 13-game Portland winning streak.

The Blazers, who led by as many as 20 points, have won three straight since that streak-stopping loss. They have lost just one of their past 17 games.

The Jazz have lost three of their past five.



AP

Boston Celtics forward Glen Davis (11) shoots over the defense of Detroit Pistons forward Rasheed Wallace (36) during the second quarter of an NBA basketball game at the Palace of Auburn Hills, Mich., Saturday, Jan. 5, 2008

Mike Weir nudges ahead by 1 at Mercedes-Benz

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP)—Mike Weir finally got one last birdie putt to fall, and it was enough to put him in the lead Saturday at the Mercedes-Benz Championship.

But even after a 5-under 68 on the most gorgeous day at Kapalua this week, one look at the leaderboard told the Canadian he would need another one just like it on Sunday, if not better.

This working vacation suddenly turned into a grind.

Weir, who missed three straight birdie chances inside 10 feet on the back nine, hit a deft chip to 3 feet for birdie on the par-5 18th that put him at 13-under 206 and gave him a one-shot lead over Nick Watney, who birdied his last two holes for a 67.

"I'm going to have to shoot another low one tomorrow," Weir said.

Daniel Chopra (67) and Jonathan Byrd (69) were another stroke back.

In the 10 years that the season-opening event on the PGA Tour has been coming to the Plantation Course at Kapalua, there has never been so many players in contention going into the final round. Twelve players were separated by five shots, including defending champion Vijay Singh and Kapalua homeowner Jim Furyk.

"There's a lot of guys that have an opportunity tomorrow," Steve Stricker said after a 68 that left him four shots behind. "For me, it's going to take a real low one to catch him. But it's out there."

Weir had to wait three years to make it back to Kapalua, the longest stretch without winning in his career, and he appears ready to make sure he won't have to do that again. Playing in the final group with Stephen Ames of Calgary, followed along by a gallery with shirts, flags and even tattoos of the Canadian flag, Weir played without a bogey on a soggy course with strong breezes and sensational views.

But he never could pull away, not with the numbers being posted ahead of him.

Weir had three great looks at birdie starting on the 14th, but all of them grazed the lip. He wasn't too worried because the stroke was good, and he had not forgotten the two par saves he made from 12 feet earlier in the round.

"I wanted to go as low as I could," Weir said. "I saw a lot of good scores out there and I wanted to keep going."

Watney made up a lot of ground on his final two holes with an approach that caught the ridge and grain beautifully on the 17th hole that set up a 20-foot birdie, then came up just short of the 650-yard closing hole in two shots for a routine birdie that put him in the final group.

"I hit the ball really well. It was a pretty stress-free day as far as that goes," Watney said. "I made some putts coming down the stretch, which is nice, and I'm excited for tomorrow."

It should be quite the shootout. One birdie can change everything. One mistake can send someone tumbling down the leaderboard.

AP

Mike Weir, of Canada, follows his drive off the first tee of the Plantation Course during the third round of the Mercedes-Benz Championship golf tournament in Kapalua, Hawaii, Saturday, Jan. 5, 2008.

Ames kept pace through nine holes and was tied with Weir at the turn, but he came up short of the 10th green, made bogey, and did not make another birdie until the final hole. He shot 70 and was alone in fifth at 10-under 209.

The group at 9 under included Furyk, whose 66 matched the low round of the tournament. Furyk, who bought a home years ago off the 18th fairway, had other plans for this week if he didn't win the Canadian Open last year to qualify. Having grown up in western Pennsylvania, he was invited by Pittsburgh Steelers coach to attend the wild-card game Saturday against the Jacksonville Jaguars.

"I guess it's too bad I won last year," he said. "I would have enjoyed that immensely."

Kapalua isn't too bad, especially because Furyk hasn't been at his best on the Plantation Course since winning in 2001. Also at 9-under 210 were Justin Leonard and Brandt Snedeker, while Singh, Chad Cambell and U.S. Open champion Angel Cabrera followed at 8 under.

"For whatever reason, there just isn't much separation, which is good for me because I haven't done anything to separate myself," Leonard said. "There's a lot of guys there. It would be easier being four shots behind with only a couple of players ahead of you. I'm not going out there thinking about winning the tournament, but it is doable."

Weir attributed the bunched leaderboard to the conditions, which have been soft all week. One year he was at Kapalua, Ernie Els hit a drive so far on the par-5 15th that he had only an 8-iron into the green, and most of the field could reach the downhill, downwind closing hole in two shots because of how fast the ball runs on the fairways.

With balls slowed by the wet grass, the advantage for big hitters isn't as great.

"I think maybe some of the longer guys can't separate themselves as much because the ball is not traveling out there as much," Weir said. "You see a lot of guys in the same areas. That's probably why the scores are a little more bunched."

Ginebra keeps flickering quarters hopes alive

**MANILA, Philippines*—Barangay Ginebra is not yet out of the woods but the Kings are glad they still have a chance to make the quarterfinals without going through the wildcard phase.

"It's a long shot but we still have a shot. That's important," said Kings coach Jong Uichico as they won their first game in the year versus Red Bull and kept their flickering hopes for the Magic Five at the close of the 2007-08 Smart PBA Philippine Cup eliminations.

The Kings came out from an 11-day rest playing with great resolve, upending the Barakos, 115-110, Wednesday night to the delight of their throng at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Jayjay Helterbrand scored a game-high 29 points, Eric Menk came through with a double-double game with 24 points and 12 rebounds while Mark Macapagal sizzled with 13 of his 15 points in the fourth quarter as the Kings scored their second back-to-back wins in the tourney, jacking up their record to 8-8.

The bad news is that the Kings still have some catching up to do to gain outright entry into the quarterfinals.

They have to win their last game against Talk n Text and hope both Red Bull and Magnolia lose all their remaining games to get a playoff crack at the fourth and fifth spots.

Red Bull slid to 9-7 on a second straight loss.

"If ever we salvage an outright entry into the quarters, it's really the hard way. But as long as we're fighting hard and doing the things that we should do, happy na ako," said Uichico.

Uichico felt his boys lost their discipline in the second quarter but found a way to get back on track in the second half as they duplicated their 102-95 rapping of the Barakos last Oct. 19.

The two teams figured in a battle of sieges with Ginebra making a jackrabbit start, Red Bull making a big turnaround in the second period, the Kings recovering in the third period and the Barakos waging another rally in the final period.

The Kings had the final laugh as they came through with a decisive run to break a 99-all standoff.

Macapagal rattled in four straight charities then scored on a short jumper to trigger the run that resolved the outcome of the game.

With Red Bull down by six, 99-105, Junthy Valenzuela hit a three-pointer that could have narrowed down the gap with two minutes to go. Alas, he extended his foot to defend his shot against the defending Macapagal and was called for an offensive foul in the process.

Valenzuela led the Barakos with 28 points, 11 coming in the second quarter to fuel an amazing run that had the team erasing an early 15-point deficit and establishing a 63-50 lead at the half.

The Kings started the game with a 15-2 run and sat on a 30-23 cushion at the end of the first period.

Mike Hrabak and Topex Robinson also had a hand in their second quarter fightback. (NC)

Ginebra 115 – Helterbrand 29, Menk 24, Macapagal 15, Reavis 11, Mamaril 10, Salvacion 9, Artadi 8, Caguioa 5, Tubid 4, Aquino 0, Escalona 0.

Red Bull 110 – Valenzuela 28, Baguio 23, Hrabak 17, Robinson 10, Najorda 9, Duncil 7, Pennisi 7, Sharma 5, Bugia 2, Cruz 2, Ybanez 0.

Quarterscores: 30-23, 50-63, 87-84, 115-110.

(www.pba.com.ph)

Alaska bucks slow start, beats Talk 'N Text

MANILA, Philippines—Tim Cone isn't completely giving up on their bid for an outright semifinal berth. But the Alaska coach was frank enough to admit their chances of clinching one of the two coveted seats look slim at the moment.

The Aces have one game left in the elimination round and Cone said they need help to accomplish their goal.

"We need help. We can't do it by ourselves. We need somebody to beat Sta. Lucia or maybe Ginebra can beat Red Bull for us so we can get in and have a chance to knockout," Cone said.

Coming short of their target doesn't seem to bother the American tactician. After all, the Aces have assured their place in the quarterfinals of the 2007-08 Smart-PBA Philippine Cup with a 102-92 victory over the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals Friday night at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"The chances of us making the top two is slim at the moment. But we're still where we want to be. We want to be in the top two but if we can't be in the top two it's the top five where we want to be," Cone said.

Alaska 102 – Miller 23, Thoss 18, Cortez 16, Hugnatan 15, Ferriols 9, Cariaso 9, Aban 8, Quinahan 2, dela Cruz 2, Bono 0.

Talk 'N Text 92 – Washington 14, Cardona 14, Ritualo 14, Allado 14, Belano 11, Peek 8, Alapag 7, Carey 6, de Ocampo Y. 4, Ferreria 0.

Quarterscores: 25-26, 56-49, 84-75, 102-92. *(www.pba.com.ph)*

JI HOON

From Page 28

consolation draw. Their game was ongoing at press time.

Heo made it to the Round of 32 of both age divisions scoring wins in the first two rounds. He opened the tournament with a hard-earned 7-6, 6-3, win over Andrew Donaldson of Parkhurst, Queensland on Thursday in the boys' 18-and-under division.

The 15-year-old Heo then defeated Lewis Ahern of East Allbury, New South Wales in straight sets, 6-2, 6-4, to make it into the Round of 32.

The Korean-born netter drew a bye in the first round of the 16-and-under division where he scored a 6-0, 6-3 win over Lewis Tenace in the Round of 64 before losing to Scobie in the Round of 32.

A total of 128 players are entered each in the 18-and-under and 16-and-under age groups.

Heo is competing in his first Australian junior championship tournament after being invited to become a member of the International Tennis Federation Pacific-Oceania Junior touring team late last year.

Heo received an invitation to join the ITF Pacific-Oceania Junior touring team in Australia last October. He left Saipan last Dec. 27 to join a group of Under-18 players that will travel around Australia from Dec. 30 to Jan. 18.

Heo's next tournament will be in the Margaret Court Cup from Jan. 8 to 12 then will close out his Aussie campaign in the CountryLink Victoria Junior Grasscourt Championships in Wodonga from Jan. 12 to 15.

SONICS

From Page 28

Rollers I with similar 5-6 slates.

They played against eh D-1 Ulloa's Saturday night but results were not yet available at press time. A win would still open a slim chance for PTI/FMI to make the playoffs while a loss would knock them out.

In case the Bombers, G-Rollers I, PTI/FMI, and the Ulloa's end up in a four-way tie, the final two playoffs spots would be determined by quotient system to break the deadlock.

It was a tight contest all throughout the match with both teams coming back every time the other is trying to pull away. Neither team also led by more than 10 points in the contest.

The Sonics were leading by 10 midway in the second quarter and just when everyone thought the Jesse Tudela-coached squad was going put the game away, PTI/FMI mounted a comeback to close out with a 39-38 halftime lead.

It was only in the second half, particularly in the fourth period, that the Sonics managed to have some breathing room thanks to timely baskets of Manuel Ajoste and Lerio Pagarao.

Ajoste scored 24 points to lead the Sonics, while Jon Lim added 18 markers. Pagarao ended up with 13 points while Ernest Duenas scattered 10 more.

Ryan Sanciangco paced PTI/FMI with 24 points and Ronald Delos Reyes tallied 20 more. George De Guzman and Leo Factor had 13 and 11 each.

Earlier, Joey Dela Cruz buried a season-high seven 3-pointers to lead the Rebels to a 99-72 thrashing of Lali IV.

The win improved the Rebels' record to 5-5 to remain half-a-game ahead of the Bombers, G-Rollers I, and PTI/FMI at sixth place. They need to sweep their last two games against the Telesource-Proa and the Junior Nationals in order to gain an outright spot in the next round.

Dela Cruz, who had seven of the Rebels' 14 3-pointers, finished with 23 points, which is the same scoring output of Luis Iguel.

Ivan Devero, Jolan Mendoza, and Tyrone Omar chipped in 15, 15, and 11 apiece.

The Rebels face Proa at 7pm today and the Nationals at 7pm on Wednesday. The Bombers will face the Nationals in today's second game while Rock Steady clashes with G-Rollers I on Wednesday.

First Game

Runnin' Rebels 99 – Dela Cruz 23, Iguel 23, Devero 15, Mendoza 15, Omar 11, Olaitiman 6, Dillay 4, Tumaquip 2.

Lali IV 72 – T. Kapileo 20, Em. Fitial 17, Ez, Fitial 17, M. Fitial 9, Tawanpiy 9.

Scoring by quarters: 18-19, 39-38, 67-54, 99-72.

Second Game

Southern Sonics 87 – M. Ajoste 24, Lim 18, L. Pagarao 13, Duenas 10, Mendiola 8, Nedlic 4, O. Ajoste 4, J. Pagarao 4, Eclevia 2.

PTI/FMI 83 – Sanciangco 24, Delos Reyes 20, De Guzman 13, Factor 11, Umali 8, Barbo 4, Muleta 3.

Scoring by quarters: 19-18, 39-38, 57-56, 87-83.

MARSHALLS

From Page 28

mitted their bid to host the 2010 Micro Games but pulled out early last year.

The Marshall Islands earned the most number of votes from representatives from the CNMI, Palau, Kiribati, Yap, the Marshall Islands, Guam, Chuuk, Kosrae, and Pohnpeii.

Yap was supposed to host the 6th Micronesian Games in 2006, but had to withdraw after most of its sports facilities were damaged by a strong typhoon that hit the island in early 2004.

Saipan sent its intention to take over the hosting of the 6th Micro Games during the VII South Pacific Mini Games in Koror, Palau in 2005. The MGC finally awarded the hosting to the CNMI before the end of 2005 and in June 2006, Saipan welcomed more than 1,000 athletes and officials from eight other Micronesian islands.

The Marshall Islands is also the newest member of the International Olympic Committee in the Micronesia region. Palau, Guam, FSM, Nauru, and Kiribati are also IOC members.

The Marshall Islands, a former U.S. territory, became the 203rd IOC member on Feb. 12. The IOC accepted the islands' National Olympic Committee in an executive board meeting during the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy.

SOCC

From Page 28

is] a lot like buying cars. The most popular [and] state-of-the-art design is the Mirage, which is designed and built by Karel Tresnak of Outrigger Connection."

Downer said what makes the Mirage is a great canoe is because of its stability in going up against waves and its aerodynamic design.

"We would most likely buy any new canoe from Outrigger Connection through their dealer in Hawaii. In fact, the manufacturer is able to paint the logo of any potential sponsor on the canoe before it is sent, and they look really good."

The cost of shipping would reach around $3,000 considering Saipan is a rather remote location from the production centers.

The SOCC board also held an election recently where Downer was elected as president, while Sonny Downer is the new vice president. Other elected officers are Brian Eckert (secretary), Joe Przyuski (treasurer), and Thu Tran (member at large).

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	29	3	.906	–
New Jersey	17	16	.515	12 1/2
Toronto	17	16	.515	12 1/2
Philadelphia	14	19	.424	15 1/2
New York	8	24	.250	21

Southeast Division

Orlando	22	13	.629	–
Washington	16	15	.516	4
Atlanta	15	16	.484	5
Charlotte	11	20	.355	9
Miami	8	25	.242	13

Central Division

Detroit	26	8	.765	–
Cleveland	16	17	.485	9 1/2
Indiana	16	18	.471	10
Chicago	13	19	.406	12
Milwaukee	12	20	.375	13

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	22	9	.710	–
New Orleans	23	11	.676	1/2
Dallas	22	11	.667	1
Houston	17	17	.500	6 1/2
Memphis	9	23	.281	13 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	20	12	.625	–
Portland	21	13	.618	–
Utah	18	17	.514	3 1/2
Seattle	9	23	.281	11
Minnesota	4	28	.125	16

Pacific Division

Phoenix	23	10	.697	–
L.A. Lakers	20	11	.645	2
Golden State	19	15	.559	4 1/2
Sacramento	12	20	.375	10 1/2
L.A. Clippers	10	20	.333	11 1/2

Yesterday's Games

New Jersey 113, Atlanta 107
Boston 92, Detroit 85
Chicago 94, Sacramento 93
Houston 103, New York 91
New Orleans 118, Phoenix 113
Portland 103, Utah 89

MERCEDES-BENZ CHAMPIONSHIP SCORES

Third Round

Mike Weir	71-67-68	206
Nick Watney	68-72-67	207
Daniel Chopra	69-72-67	208
Jonathan Byrd	70-69-69	208
Stephen Ames	72-67-70	209
Jim Furyk	74-70-66	210
Steve Stricker	73-69-68	210
Justin Leonard	73-68-69	210
Brandt Snedeker	71-69-70	210
Vijay Singh	74-70-67	211
Chad Campbell	75-68-68	211
Angel Cabrera	70-71-70	211
Charles Howell III	74-70-68	212
Mark Calcavecchia	75-66-71	212
Steve Flesch	72-70-71	213
Hunter Mahan	73-72-69	214
Zach Johnson	76-67-71	214
Aaron Baddeley	70-71-73	214
Rory Sabbatini	72-74-69	215
Scott Verplank	73-70-72	215
George McNeill	74-69-72	215
Woody Austin	73-74-69	216
Charley Hoffman	75-72-70	217
Brian Bateman	76-70-72	218
Fred Funk	75-71-72	218
Mark Wilson	74-72-73	219
Paul Goydos	81-73-67	221
Boo Weekley	80-74-68	222
Joe Ogilvie	75-73-74	222
K.J. Choi	79-75-69	223
Henrik Stenson	76-75-73	224

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

Bud Cup Standings

Ol'Aces	11	1
Suns	10	2
Rock Steady	9	2
Sonics	9	3
Junior Nationals	6	3
Runnin Rebels	5	5
Bombers	5	6
G-Rollers I	5	6
PTI/FMI	5	6
D-I Ulloa's	4	7
G-Rollers II	3	9
Lali IV	1	11
Proa	0	11

Talavera, Williams top BRS in 2007

Williams

By MARK RABAGO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Robert Talavera and Emi Williams cemented their reputation as the No. 1 bowlers on Saipan after finishing on top of their respective divisions in the 2007 Bowling Ranking System of the Saipan Bowling Association.

Talavera never looked back after taking the lead from erstwhile frontrunner Richard Leong following the May Masters Tournament as the native of Minalin, Pampanga in the Philippines finished with a total of 1,575 points.

The Saipan Bowling Association lanes supervisor won the PBA Bowler of the Year and the July and September rolls off of the monthly King of the Lanes of SBA.

It was during the September King of the Lanes, last Sept. 23 and 24, that Talavera rolled perfect games in back-to-back nights.

Leong wound up 285 pins short of Talavera's total with his 1,290 points, as the lefty sales manager of Multiline Supply won the February roll-off of SBA and was also champion of the annual PBA classified tournament last August. He also took home the high average award of the Saturday Night League.

Raymond Zapanta took third with 1,144 points. The youth kegler finish first in the August and October King of the Lanes aside from topping the high average awards of the Thursday and Friday night leagues of the Capital Bowling Center.

Talavera's older brother Edgar ranked fourth with 1,129 points with Alex Cacdac completing the Top 5 with 1,125 points.

Edgar narrowly beat Robert in the May Masters Tournament of the Philippine Bowling Association and was the high average winner of the SBC Friday Night League, while Cacdac's claim to fame in 2007 was winning the March King of the Lanes as well as finishing strong in other tournaments last year.

December King of the Lanes runner-up Kitz Barja, meanwhile, moved up to sixth place after dislodging Raymond Angeles who fell to seventh. Barja came away with 1,095 points as against Angeles' 1,075.

Barja was the April King of the Lanes and CBC Friday Night League high average winner, while Angeles was May King of the Lanes champion.

Eighth to 10th places were secured by December King of the Lanes Jonathan Eparwa, January King of the Lanes Raul Dumapit and June King of the Lanes Simon Manacop.

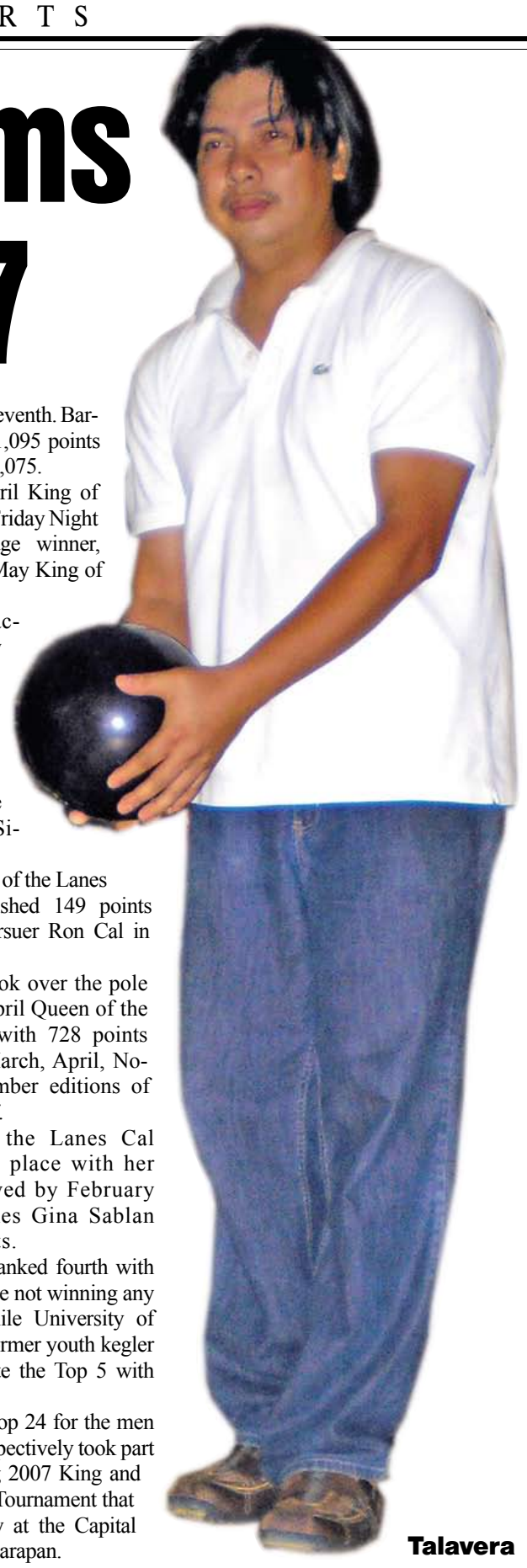
Over in the Queen of the Lanes BRS, Williams finished 149 points ahead of closest pursuer Ron Cal in the competition.

Williams, who took over the pole position after the April Queen of the Lanes, wound up with 728 points after topping the March, April, November, and December editions of the monthly roll-off.

July Queen of the Lanes Cal settled for second place with her 579 points, followed by February Queen of the Lanes Gina Sablan with her 498 points.

Diane Camacho ranked fourth with her 470 points despite not winning any monthly plums, while University of Guam student and former youth kegler Jerrie Vales complete the Top 5 with her 420 points.

The Top 36 and Top 24 for the men and women BRS respectively took part in the season-ending 2007 King and Queen of the Lanes Tournament that kicked off yesterday at the Capital Bowling Center in Garapan.


Talavera

Gomez a gamer at USSP pool

Erwin Gomez returned to his winning ways, coming back to take the first USS Peleliu Club 8-ball tournament of the year.

Franz De Luna looked like the man to beat, as he plowed through Mario Diola, John Mongami, and Rolly Villanueva to head the winners' bracket.

Mongami had topped Ken Phillips, while Villanueva sent Nolan Cultura and Gomez to the losers' bracket. Gomez beat Ed Manucdoc before losing to Villanueva.

Cultura came back with a win over Manucdoc, then fell to Mongami.

Phillips edged out Diola thanks to a foul, but couldn't get past Gomez.

Gomez then put Mongami in fourth place and won his rematch to give Villanueva third. He then took two straight from De Luna for the championship.

Gomez got $45 for first place, with $25 for second and $10 for third.

"There were only eight players because of the holiday," said Phillips, "but all of the matches were extremely close."

"We're going back to our regular schedule this week. The 9-ball tournament is Monday and 8-ball is still on Wednesday."

The 9-ball is round-robin unless there are too many players, then it is single elimination. The 8-ball tournament is double elimination. The starting time is 8pm and there is a $10 entry fee.

For more information, please contact Rose or Ken Phillips at 233-1984. ***(USSP)***

Price Costco sponsors cage clinic

By JON PEREZ
REPORTER

Price Costco sponsored a basketball youth clinic conducted by veteran referee Arnold Mesa held at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium from Dec. 26 to 28.

Mesa said he decided to organize the clinic, with the help of Price Costco, on the request of Southern Sonics coach Jesse Tudela, who asked him to train the Junior Sonics.

Close to 40 from Tudela's Sonics basketball program and Mt. Carmel School athletes and coaches participated in the three-day clinic, which covered the basic violations. The clinic also lasted three hours a day.

Mesa demonstrated to all participants on how to properly do the pump fake to avoid making a traveling violation. This is one of the violations that most youth players commit in the game.

Other skills that Mesa discussed are rebounding situations, blocking and screen situations, doing a clean block shot, and properly executing the one-dribble layup in finishing a fastbreak attempt.

Mesa also explained the differences of the contents between the old [FIBA rule] book and the new book. "The variety of zone defenses, its weaknesses, and strengths, the efficient no-injury, no-violation man-to-man situations as well as how to defend and deal with a box-and-one situation."

Mesa also demonstrated in the clinic detailed steps in hand and body movements, its purposes, and how the violation is called. "It is important for our youth to understand this rules of basketball."

Mesa is planning to hold another Price Costco Island-wide free sports basketball clinic where his next stop would be in Kagman High School.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Arnold Mesa, standing left, joins Junior Sonics and coach Jesse Tudela, standing right, for a group photo after the Price Costco Youth Basketball clinic last Dec. 28 at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Little League meeting next week

Saipan Little League Baseball, Inc. president Juan I. Tenorio is requesting all team managers, coaches or assistants, and other volunteers to attend the scheduled meeting on Jan. 15, Tuesday.

The meeting will be held at 6pm at the pavilion beside the Gilbert C. Gymnasium inside the Susupe Sports Complex.

Tenorio is requesting all concerned to mark their calendars on Jan. 15 so they won't forget the important meeting as they continue their preparations for the coming 2008 season.

The entrance fee and other required documents like proof of player's eligibility are due on the said meeting.

A total of 10 teams have signified their intention to join the Majors division of the Saipan Little League, which is tentatively set to open on Feb. 7, led by the three-peat seeking Patriots.

The SLLBA is hoping to again tap the support of local businesses for their 2008 season where they plan to again talk to various businesses on Saipan to become their financial supporter.

Aside from soliciting the support of local businesses, the SLLBA board will also hold fundraising activities, as they will let the parents of the kids get involved in the Little League program.

Aside from planning the 2008 season, SLLBA officials with the help of CNMI Little League district administrator James Ada will also start their preparation for the hosting of the district and regional tournaments.

Saipan will be hosting Tinian and Rota in the 2008 CNMI District Tournament. The winners of the district tournament will represent the CNMI in the regional meet where they will be facing teams from Guam, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and the Philippines,

Other SLLBA officers are vice president and player agent Michael A. Borja, secretary Bobbie Norita-Techur, treasurer Annie Deleon Guerrero Flores, chief statistician Roque Celis, safety officer Ben Taitano, umpire consultant James Miwata, and managers' representative George N. Camacho. ***(Jon Perez)***

Talavera, Williams top BRS in 2007

Robert Talavera and Emi Williams cemented their reputation as the No. 1 bowlers on Saipan after finishing on top of their respective divisions in the 2007 Bowling Ranking System of the Saipan Bowling Association. 27

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Jaguars stun Steelers on late field goal

Never in the Steelers' 75 seasons had a team beaten them twice in Pittsburgh in the same season. The Jaguars beat history–and the Steelers–despite a memorable fourth-quarter collapse that nearly cost Jacksonville its season. 24

Ji Hoon drops to consolation draw

By JON PEREZ
REPORTER

The CNMI's Ji Hoon Heo dropped to the consolation draw of two age divisions in the 2008 Ducats G.V. Junior Tennis Tournament in Shepparton, Australia.

Results last Friday saw the Marianas High School student losing his boys' 16-and-under singles Round of 32 match against top seed Ethan Scobie, 6-3, 6-2, relegating him in the consolation draw.

Scobie now faces ninth-seed Ashley Janke in the semifinals with the winner battling the winner of the match between No. 3 Adam Taylor and fifth ranked Joseph Flanagan.

Heo then faced Queensland's Christ Hart, who is an 8-5 winner over Tyler Neve of New South Wales, in the third round where he scored an 8-1 decision to advance to the Round IV Qualifier.

He was scheduled to play the winner of the match between Dylan Cleary and Kyle Bartlett yesterday but results were not yet available as of press time.

The same thing happened to Heo in the 18-and-under division where fellow unseeded player Calvin Patterson knocked him out, 6-2, 7-5, dropping him again to the consolation draw.

He will face the winner of the match between Dane McKinnon of Australia and James MacCallum in the 3rd Round of the boys' 18-and-under

See JI HOON on Page 26

Ji Hoon Heo prepares in this file photo taken during his finals match against Jeff Race in last year's DFS Micronesian Tennis Tournament at the Pacific Islands Club tennis courts.

JON PEREZ

Sonics, Rebels shore up playoff bids

JON PEREZ

The Southern Sonics' Manuel Ajoste tries to look for an open teammate against the defense of Ryan Sanciangco of PTI/FMI in their 2007 BANMI Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League game last Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

By JON PEREZ
REPORTER

Southern Sonics and the Runnin' Rebels improved their respective playoff bids in the 2007 BANMI Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League after beating separate opponents Friday night.

The Sonics scored an 87-83 win over PTI/FMI, while the Rebels used a second half scoring explosion to flew past Lali IV, 99-72, as games resumed at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

It was the Sonics' fourth straight win to close out their elimination round campaign at fourth place with a 9-3 slate. They have not lost since suffering an 80-76 defeat from the hands of the pennant titlist Ol'Aces on Nov. 10, 2007.

The loss, meanwhile, endangered PTI/FMI's playoff bid as they dropped to a three-way tie with the Bombers and the Marianas Health Services G-

See SONICS on Page 26

Marshalls to host 2010 Micro Games

By JON PEREZ
REPORTER

The Micronesian Games Council has awarded the hosting rights of the 2010 Micronesian Games to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, bringing the seventh edition of the quadrennial event to Majuro.

In a brief email message from Palau National Olympic Committee secretary general Baklai Temingil, that she has been advised by MGC president William "Bill" Keldermans to officially send the message.

Temingil wrote to Marshall Islands National Olympic Committee president Kenneth Cramer and secretary general Terry Sasser informing them of the MGC's decision.

Temingil congratulated Cramer, Sasser, and the entire MINOC for getting the hosting rights and reminded them to confirm their acceptance as soon as possible.

The Marshall Islands bested Yap of the Federated States of Micronesia. Kosrae also sub-

See MARSHALLS on Page 26

A giant 2006 Micronesian Games cake is shown here in a file photo. The 2010 edition of the quadrennial event will be held in Majuro, Marshall Islands.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

SOCC eyeing to add two more canoes

By JON PEREZ
REPORTER

The Saipan Outrigger Canoe Club is eyeing to add at least three more canoes to its fleet this year that would help increase the number of working canoes on the island.

SOCC currently has two working canoes, one of which is wholly owned by the club while the other one they share with the Marianas High School, which is the owner of the canoe.

SOCC vice president Sonny Downer said they also often use the canoes owned by the Napu Outrigger Canoe Club since their members are not active at the moment.

As of now, there are a total of 12 working canoes on the island—some are being repaired. Two of the canoes are of the Moana Nui variety, which World Resort shouldered the cost of repair but are available for use by all clubs.

Saipan also has two Hawaiian Rocket racing canoes; Napu owns four or five canoes of the similar variety, while Mau Fatuul Canoe Club has two Hawaiian Rockets and one Moana Nui.

Downer said a new canoe would cost about $7,000 to $9,000 depending on what kind of package you would get. "[It

See SOCC on Page 26